

The Voice of Conscience.



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MRS. S. C. HALL,

THIS UNPRETENDING VOLUME IS,

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RISPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

INSCRIBED

BY HER SINCERE FRIEND

AND ADMIRER,

THE AUTHOR.



INTRODUCTION.

A FEW summers ago, I paid a visit to an old clergyman in Cornwall, who had been a college-friend of my father's, and ever since those early days, had kept up with him an interchange of kindnesses and friendship. He had frequently invited me to visit his rectory, which was situated in one of the most secluded and picturesque nooks of the county.

* The outline of the facts mentioned in the following Narrative given in the form of an autobiography, appeared in "Carne's Letters from Ireland," contained in Colburn's New Monthly Magazine for January, 1839. The writer, who availed herself of these materials as the ground-work of her tale, took some pains to ascertain their probable truth, and the result has been unquestionable evidence of their veracity.

I had never been in that part of England before, and was delighted with the wild beauty of many of its localities. But as I have no intention to enter into any description of the place, or to linger on any of the details of my visit; I proceed at once to account for the circumstances that placed in my possession the manuscript of the following somewhat singular narrative.

At no great distance from the Rev. Mr. M——'s house, was a cottage that attracted my observation, from its peculiarly beautiful situation, and the air of decay and abandonment that marked its outward appearance. It had been built on an eminence that commanded a noble view of the sea, strand, and surrounding country. A garden in the front, that once may have been in good order and keeping, was now run wild, and overgrown with weeds—denoting, that for some time past no

hand had trained, no care had been bestowed upon it. The woodbine and other creeping plants had run riot on the porch and walls, for want of a pruning-knife to lop their unnecessary luxuriance. The casements of the windows looked decaying, and the glass in many of the panes was broken ; yet there was something in the aspect of the place—all neglected and desolate as it was—that struck my observation, and elicited the inquiry—“ why it was that a dwelling, so susceptible, as it appeared, of being made a more than commonly desirable one, should be thus suffered to fall to ruin and decay ?”

In answer to this query, my friend replied, “ There would seem something like a fatality attached to that cottage, for, since *my* time, two families who have inhabited it, were very unfortunate : the first of whom became, from unavoidable circumstances, too poor to con-

tinue there ;—the other, lost their two sweet children in sudden illnesses, and they were both buried on the same day—the parents after that event could not remain in the scene of their calamity—since which period, the cottage has been untenanted ; people seem almost afraid of residing in a place, where so much sorrow has been suffered. But during my *father's* life, it was, that this dwelling was connected with the events of a somewhat sad story, the particulars of which would, perhaps, interest you.” “Pray let me hear them,” said I eagerly, “I am always anxious to learn as many ‘local legends,’ as are connected with the different places I visit.”

“This legend—if so it might be termed—is not quite of the character, perhaps, you expect ; it is a grave and sombre narrative of facts that occurred—many of them, at least—in this very neighbourhood ; and the portion of romance

connected with it, is the romance of ‘real life,’ and though something different from very common-place, every-day doings, is yet perhaps hardly piquant enough to satisfy any one used to the excitement of stimulating fiction.”

“ Narratives that are based on *truth*,” I replied, “ interest me much more, even though comparatively tame, than the most racy ones which are *wholly* invented. But, at any rate —for the tale ; let me judge of its” merits.”

“ It is rather too long to be narrated,” said my friend, “ you must wait till I can find you the manuscript ; besides, its gist consists in the writer’s own reflections and remarks ; which cannot be well repeated, even could they be remembered. Some years have elapsed since I read it myself, and, if you please, we will listen to the recital this evening, in the drawing-room.

"I should likewise tell you that my father knew well the individual who was the author of the autobiography in question ; he attended him on his death-bed, administered the sacrament, and received his last requests and dying words.

"The final scene comported well with his previous penitence and mental suffering. He was, as I think you will soon perceive, no common man ; but I must not anticipate the story. On his death-bed he gave two manuscripts to my father—one was sealed and directed to his son, then residing in the south of Ireland ; the other was open, and, as he said, intended for the perusal of his reverend friend, and at his entire disposal. At some distant period, when all the parties were deceased—mentioned in the papers—then, if any person thought proper to edit and publish them, his full leave was given, in humble

hope that the perusal might not be altogether unsalutary.

“ Now,” continued my friend, “ during my father’s life most of the parties were alive, but I have lately discovered that the last surviving member of the family died in penury in the city of Cork; therefore, if you think, after a careful reading, any good might be done by its publication, the manuscript is at your service; and you may, if you please, prepare it for the press.”

When the perusal of the papers was finished, I availed myself of my friend’s permission, and now present them to the public, hoping that the design may be realized which the writer seemed to have had in view, and which induced him to commit his sad memoirs to paper, namely—that they may serve as a beacon-light, to warn others of the shoals and quick-sands on which he had made shipwreck; and,

though, as we may hope, he himself was finally received into the haven of peace, and saved "so as by fire;" yet, the loss sustained, and the wounds inflicted, were too real, and too agonizing, ~~for their~~ narration not to be ripe with instruction the most important and momentous.

THE
VOICE OF CONSCIENCE

CHAPTER I.

" But we have known that there is often found
In mournful thoughts,—and always might be found—
A power to virtue friendly." WORDSWORTH.

Try, and perhaps thou might'st not err
To sound the depths of ocean's caves,
When long and late the mariner
Impels his bark o'er unknown waves;
But think not with thine utmost art
To fathom *all* thy brother's heart!

E. TAYLOR.

THE wintry wind howls through my desolate dwelling—the scanty fire flickers in the grate—the dim light, burning feebly in the socket, makes the misery around more palpable: but what are these outward tokens of desolation, to those inward vultures that prey upon my most wretched heart?

I have at length summoned courage to take up my pen, and make it tell the story of my life—a life of no ordinary incidents and emotions—a life, many portions of which are “so strange, ‘tis hard to think them true”—and yet, o'er true they are. The recording my ~~sad~~ history is no pleasing task, no light beguilement—the recital of some of its sections will cause my nerves to quiver, my heart to bleed—and yet, for the further satisfaction of my dear forsaken son, for the employment of my heavy hours, for a warning to any other wanderer from the paths of safety and peace, I must prosecute my task, I *must* endure the self-imposed penance of confession.

I cannot pretend, however, to enter minutely into every circumstance, to record all the changes that have occurred both mentally and outwardly in my sad career; were I to attempt such an extended narrative, my waning strength would fail, death would stop my pen, ere the half was told. But what need of premising that *my* history will not be a complete one? for where shall we find a full and entire account of any one individual?—a *full* record, taking note of the internal as well as the

external life, could only be accomplished (methinks) by the pen of the recording angel. In this world, we must be content with mere outlines of character, mere glimpses into the chambers of imagery—the revelation of many of the soul's secrets must be reserved for another and higher state of existence.

I was born in a village of the county of Cornwall, about the year 17—, and in the very house I am now writing. My father's name was Trevanion; he was a miner, and in that employment had been occupied all his life; he earned good wages, and, in his lowly station, was deemed an upright, honest man; his employers treated him with confidence and consideration: he was better instructed than many of his fellow-labourers, for he could read—at that time no common acquirement in his walk of life. He was a man of quiet and orderly habits, without any ambition to emerge from the situation in which Providence had placed him, and was a good specimen of the better sort of English labourers before the ferment of later years had put other and more

restless thoughts into their minds. Yet was he not an unreasoning man, one who acquiesced in his lot through mere mental imbecility. There was a certain substratum of good sense in his character that enabled him to observe and argue soundly upon things. I remember hearing, when a boy, his just remarks upon the necessity and propriety of there being different ranks and degrees in the social system. These observations may have been uttered in homely enough language, but the good sense that dictated them, made a strong impression on my youthful mind, which had then a great tendency to contrary opinions. Many other remarks of my father's proved his understanding to be one of much native strength; and though I never loved him with the extreme tenderness I did my mother, yet my affection for him was blended with respect.

As to my last-named parent, I cannot dismiss her with so brief a notice; her nature was cast in a very different mould from that of her husband. It was too exalted and refined for her lot in life. My mother was a creature of feeling and imagination, one who, if moving in a different sphere of society, would have been thought a beauty and a genius: she

possessed a mind of superior powers; and whatever share of ability or talent I may lay claim to, descended evidently from her. How frequently do sons bear more mental resemblance to their female than their male parent, as Buffon testifies when he says, *les races se feminisent.*

My mother had been, before her marriage, an upper servant in the family of a gentleman in the neighbourhood, and had raised herself through the mere force of superior intelligence, from one of the lowest to the very highest post in the house—that of confidential domestic to the lady. In this—to her—exalted situation she was subjected to the addresses of a man calling himself a gentleman, a relative of the family's, and who had constant access to the house. He went through the routine of deceit usual in such cases; at first, veiling his base purposes under the mask of respectful love, thereby gaining the affections and confidence of a woman immeasurably his superior in all but adventitious advantages. My poor mother was for a time beguiled by the idea that she would be honourably raised to a station of life, she felt she had a capacity becomingly to fill; visions of hope and refined hap-

piness visited her day-dreams; and existence, for a while, wore an air of new enchantment. Terrible, at length, was her awakening from the illusion; heavy was the blow dealt to her woman's pride—, to her woman's tenderness! and when she thoroughly understood the real designs of the heartless being who had thus deceived and insulted her, her lofty spirit, stung to the quick by the sense of meditated injury and degradation, made her abruptly quit her situation, and, with it, all hopes of worldly advancement, rather than be again subject to his now hateful presence; her previous love seemed completely absorbed by her virtuous indignation.

My father had long secretly admired, but despaired of ever obtaining the hand of so superior a person as he justly regarded my mother; but now was a favourable moment to press his suit, to offer his honest, his respectful affection; and this he did with so much real delicacy of feeling, that, humbled and crushed as she was by the recent blow, the contrast of the different conduct of her great, and her lowly lover, made so favourable an impression for the latter, that she consented to become his wife, “could he be cōntended,” as she told him,

"with a seared and drooping heart." Although not able to enter into all the refinements of my mother's character, yet he had discrimination enough to appreciate her superiority, and to respect her dejection.

After a few months they were married. His little cottage was put in order; and, with the savings of some years (for my father was between thirty and forty) he procured for his bride many articles of comfort, that for a working man, in those days, were esteemed almost luxuries. I need scarcely say here, that all these particulars were told me by my mother when I was old enough to enter into her confidence and sentiments. Never, perhaps, did more tender, intimate, and complete communion exist between mother and son, than was enjoyed in our case. She bore me no common love; it was a deep, idolizing, concentrated affection, such as but few hearts are capable of entertaining. But I anticipate too much.

My parents went on as contentedly and smoothly in their humble way, as the most favourably matched usually do. The happiness of my father was unalloyed; as much could not be said in my mother's

case: her nature being more sensitive and refined, and her taste for a superior style of living and thinking, having been excited by what she had witnessed in the family in which she had lived, though but in a subordinate situation. These, and similar causes, had rendered her, perhaps, in a degree, unfit for the homely enjoyment of a poor man's fire-side. I say unfitted her for the *enjoyment* of her lot, not for fulfilling its duties; she was much too right-minded a person, to give way to wrong and useless repining. Her highest aspirations having been checked on earth, ascended to heaven: she prayed for strength to fulfil her duties; cheerfully to endure her destiny, to make the most of its alleviations. Her husband's comfort and happiness were studied in the slightest minutiae; he was generally welcomed from his toil with smiles, often called up for the occasion. The only thing that ever apparently dejected her, was the want of offspring—for I was not born till the fifth year of her marriage: she passionately yearned for a child, to love; for a being, on whom she could bestow the whole energy of her deep affections. At length her prayers were heard. Ah! why do we ever pray for

any temporal good beyond our daily bread? She had a son given her—*I* was presented to her longing arms. Now she had enough to interest her, enough to give, once more, a zest to life. “This dear child,” she said, “will be an ample compensation for all my disappointments; henceforth I devote my life to him. Oh! that he may have been born to a brighter and better destiny than either of his parents.” Alas! was it a feeling of discontent with her own humble lot, and an incipient ambition, that dictated this prayer? for in vengeance was it answered! Had an honest labourer’s occupation been mine, through the whole of my life, how much of suffering, how much of sin, might I not have escaped! But let me still linger on recollections of my mother, and my own childhood; soon enough will come the “days of darkness.”

CHAPTER II.

A mother's love! how sweet the name!
What is a mother's love?
A holy, pure and tender flame,
Enkindled from above. J. MONTGOMERY.

We have heard from you, a voice
At every moment soften'd in its course
By tenderness of heart: have seen your eye,
Even like an altar lit by fire from heaven,
Kindle before us. WORDSWORTH.

How few mothers, among the rich and luxurious, love their children with that passionate degree of tenderness, my poor mother did me! Even those who do possess the capability of strong emotions, have so many objects of interest to divide their affections! Besides, how does the blight of vanity frequently deaden and weaken even their holiest and strongest instincts! Of this, in the course of my narrative, I shall have to notice a bitter and appalling proof! — Neither is the condition of extreme poverty a

more genial atmosphere for parental affection to flourish in. For, how is it possible that *very* poor persons can rejoice in, or welcome an additional burden on their scanty means? Want, like vice, has a tendency to dry up the springs of the affections, and to substitute a heartless selfishness in their place. But my parents were exempt from this latter evil—for my father being of the first-class miners, earned more than sufficient for his few wants, and humble mode of living: he gave the whole amount constantly to his wife, and she showed her superior sense and judgment by the good management evinced in its expenditure; their cottage wore an air of comfort, cleanliness, and superior arrangement, not often found in the abodes of those, to whose order they belonged. I well remember, in early childhood, how much better I was clothed than the children who lived near us, but, with whom my mother never wished me to associate: it was not the homeliness, but the grossness of her neighbours she shrank from, though, they said, it was pride which caused her reserve.

But I was not totally destitute of young companions, as Lady Ormsby—my mother's former

mistress—allowed me frequently to be taken to her mansion, in order not only to gratify her former favourite servant, but also because the young heir, Master Ormsby—an only son, about two years my senior—willed that I should sometimes be sent for, to help to entertain him. I may here observe, that the above-named lady was always very kind to my mother, and after her marriage treated her with a degree of consideration that told well for both. Thus was I early accustomed to see and be familiar with the elegancies and refinements of polished life, and brought into contact with what tended to enlarge my mind, and afforded greater opportunities for observation. The evils that may have resulted from such unequal intercourse were averted partly by the good sense of my excellent parent, who often reminded me of the vast difference of my own station—partly the tone of superiority or condescension generally assumed by the young gentleman himself, who seemed thoroughly to understand our relative positions, and who, though really good-tempered, possessed a sufficiency of self-importance, and often made me feel, that he considered he had a *right* to be my master. At such times my ple-

heian blood would rise and chafe, as much as if it had flowed in veins aristocratic, and I would quickly return to my fond mother, declaring I would submit no longer to the tyranny of the young despot. But soon would he relent, and, sending for me again, promise not to be so exacting in future. I, who felt for him a sort of feudal attachment, was soon persuaded to forget my resentment, and we went on very well together once more.

On this footing our familiar intercourse continued, till he was about fourteen, when he was sent to a public school, preparatory to the University. I saw him afterward only for brief periods during his vacations, nor should I have mentioned this childish intimacy at all, but to account for the fact of my early imbibing a taste for society and refinement above my station, and likewise as a reason why my manners—I cannot but be aware—were different from the generality of boys that belonged to my own grade of society.

My mother, when I was quite young, began to teach me to read, and was delighted to find I made no difficulty of her lessons—she was proud of my quickness and memory, and frequently had, as she

afterward told me, vague and dim, but felicitous visions of my future superior destiny. Alas ! dear mother, didst thou not, then, estimate over-much the advantages of knowledge and station, as well as thy son's capability and worthiness ! But, thank God, thou wert spared witnessing aught else than a realization of the golden dreams suggested by thy maternal love. Of his after lapse and reverses thou knowest not :—how often, truly, are the “ righteous taken away from the evil to come !”

My parents regularly attended the parish church, and of course took me with them. I should here notice that they both had a very sincere reverence for religion, in its forms, as well as in its substance —though, perhaps, of the latter they had at this time but a very imperfect knowledge. The clergyman of the place resembled in character the great proportion of the clergy of the reformed church at *that* period. In many notices of those times they are described as ~~old~~ formalists, even when outward morality was preserved. In their desire to remove as far as possible from what, perhaps, they justly regarded as the errors of separation and dissent—they had sunk into such a state

of lethargy and supineness—that it required probably as energetic an arouser as the memorable Wesley to awaken them from their slumber—to remind them of their duties.

As to my beloved mother, I should say she was, by temperament, devotional—even had she been ignorant of the sublime truths of religion, she would have erected in her heart “an altar to the unknown God.” Such a spirit as hers could not dwell contentedly in the *present*—the future, with its high destinies and developements, must have been the subject of her hopes and aspirations. But, are there any truly noble natures, that possess not the devotional faculty?—do not such souls frequently crave, in their inward being, for communion with the highest good? Do they not often, when wearied with the littleness and emptiness of created things, “cry out” of the depths of their spirits for, “the living God?” It may be true, indeed, that this religious *sentiment*, these high aspirations, ought not to be mistaken for the possession of genuine Christianity—they, perhaps, have none of its humbling—little of its purifying influence. Yet let not this natural religion—if it may be so termed—be de-

spised or undervalued—if fostered and cherished, it will lead to more authentic faith—to safer consolation—it will be the precursor star, that stays not in its course till it reaches and rests at Bethlehem! And, so it was in my mother's case: for many years the piety, that had, as it were, grown up with her, continued to comfort her mind in its many privations, and sustain her hopes in unseen realities—until a more certain faith and fuller assurance became hers.

But it strikes me whether it will be thought that what I have said of my mother's character is exaggerated and unnatural; whether it will be supposed that I have, in ascribing to a mere labourer's wife, so much refinement of mind, so much nobleness of thought, exceeded the truth, and have been untrue to nature. I know indeed there are few such minds to be met with in *her* sphere of life—would it be too much to say, in any? the aristocracy of mind—is it not, like any other aristocracy, comparatively small—when compared with the plebeian herd? the gifts of intellect—are they not bestowed on comparatively few, when measured with the mindless mass? Yet in the distribution of

these rare gifts, there is evidently a just impartiality—though the iron weight of circumstances often render their bestowment vain or void to the labouring classes; and to the weaker sex, a fearful boon, increasing their sense of suffering, without alleviating its bitterness. Men of superior talents may possibly work their way upward through their instrumentality: not so women—they are wedded—except in some very rare instances—to the fortunes and *spheres* of their husbands; and if these are confined or ignoble, no matter how ethereal their spirit—how superior their minds—they are chained to the wheel of their destiny for life.

But my mother had learnt enough in the highest school of wisdom to prevent her repining at her lot; she was content to exercise the powers of her vigorous mind for the benefit of her husband and her son: with them she possessed unbounded influence, nor did she murmur at the narrowness of its limit: possessing much of the high-soul'd sentiment of a Roman matron, she joyfully delegated to the latter all assumption of mental superiority. "Should I live to see my son," she would say, "alike respected for his acquirements and worth—

rich will be my reward, ample my satisfaction. I can contribute little, perhaps, towards this desired result, but, as far as my power extends, I will forward it to the utmost: *then*, indeed, I should, be fully satisfied with my own lowly lot, and thankfully acknowledge I had not lived altogether in vain!" Dear and blessed spirit! thou didst live to see thy cherished hopes fulfilled—thy ardent longings satisfied—of the rest, in thy abode of blessedness, thou couldst not be cognisant.

CHAPTER III.

Life hath its May, and 't is mirthful then ;
The woods are vocal, and the flowers all odour :
Its very blast hath mirth in't. SHAKSPEARE.

I WOULD fain dwell awhile on the recollections of my boyhood; that period of life, generally so rife with present and anticipated enjoyments—when the buoyant spirits keep time to the bounding current of the young blood, as yet neither impeded nor slackened in its coursings; when vigorous health induces vigorous effort, and mind and body act simultaneously, and are in perfect unison. The unthinking joy of boyhood! can it be ever again tasted in any after-portion of life? can it ever be again enjoyed in the coming years, which bring a conscious experience of the knowledge of good and evil? for, in their advance, is not their glory dimmed by the shadows of futurity! The gossamer delights of childhood, fly they not away before

time's foot-fall, light and gladsome though it be, in his early prime and freshness?

Well do I remember the keen and exquisite sense of delight I experienced, when young master Ormsby would allow me—in default of better company—to accompany him in his rides, on one of his beautiful ponies: how we bounded and raced over the wild, and in many parts, picturesque country, like children of the wind—sometimes attaining a bold headland that overlooked old ocean in his majesty, sometimes scampering over the strand at its base. On these occasions, almost delirious with delight, and forgetting the difference in our stations, I would pour out my pleasure and gratification in such energetic terms, that amused and astonished my less impetuous companion. I remember, on one of these excursions, which were not very frequent—therefore the more prized and enjoyed—I said to him, “O master Frederick, how I *do* wish I was your brother!” “A modest wish,” replied he, half in joke, “but pray why do you not at once wish you were myself? for, don’t you know, if there were two of us, I could not then have two ponies, or perhaps a boat, nor half as many things

as I now have?" "I did not think of that," said I, "but I should be quite contented with half of every thing you have, and think I should enjoy them twice as much as you do." "Not when you became as used to them, as I am, perhaps," continued he—"though if you *did* feel ever so much delight, and were a young *gentleman*, you must not talk about it so much, and so loudly; they tell me it is vulgar to do so." "I am sure," answered I, somewhat piqued "that *my* mother knows very well what is *really* vulgar, and she never yet told me, I did wrong in expressing my pleasure freely at any thing." "Oh," said he, "it is very well for *you* to do so—what I said only related to gentlemen!"

I went home that day, greatly wondering at this exposition of vulgarity, and delighted that I could pour out to my dear mother my own swelling emotions of gratification and delight. She smiled when I related to her our recent conversation; only gently remarking, that it was quite proper for *me* to speak as I felt and thought.

But, in general, even boys have their troubles: the schoolmaster and his requirements usually deduct a good portion of their happiness; but it

was not so in my case, for I never went to school, except to learn a little more arithmetic than my mother could teach me: all else I knew, was from her gentle instruction. She taught me some elementary knowledge of grammar and geography, and cultivated a taste for reading and poetry; beyond this, she attempted not—and this slender lore was, at that period, and for persons in our stations, thought extraordinary; indeed, when I reflect on the few opportunities and facilities my mother ever possessed for acquiring even what she did know, I am the more convinced of the unusual vigour of her mind, and its capabilities, had her position been more favourable.

But often, as I grew older, would misgivings arise in my mind as to my future destination. My tender parent sympathized with me, in my distaste to a life of entire bodily toil. I felt altogether unfitted, as well as disinclined, to pursue the perilous occupation which my father and forefathers had done before me. I could not bear the idea, either of having constantly to associate with the coarse uncouth miners, for so they then were, who would be my daily companions. The way my mother

had reared me, the superior refinement of her mind and manners to the persons around us, the occasional contact, as I have noticed, with those superior to me in station—these causes had combined to render the duties of my lowly lot altogether unpalatable. And here I cannot help noticing the very equivocal advantage education is to the lower classes, as I deduce from my own experience; I mean a larger measure of intellectual culture than is included in being taught to read and write. For, does not *more* than this, tend to make them discontented, and therefore unhappy? does it not create a craving for artificial wants and refinements, such as can only be obtained by a richer class of society? the evils, as it appears to me, are more numerous than the advantages, unless, indeed, moral and spiritual culture keep pace with intellectual.

It is true, I was far from being, in the proper sense of the term, educated—but the cultivation of my mind had been encouraged—my reasoning powers had as far as possible been developed, and the imaginative faculty had been brought into exercise, by the taste my mother sought to excite in

behalf of her favourite poets: she had purchased the works of some of these, from a travelling book-vender who occasionally came to our neighbourhood. Early did I begin to con over the sublimities of Milton—the awe-inspiring solemnities of Young—the flowing numbers of Pope—the beautiful devotion of George Herbert—and the quaint fancifulness of Quarles. On this mental food was my young spirit fed, for I not only read the poetry, but so dwelt and lived on it, that 'it became in great degree a part and parcel of my mind. Many parts of Milton, especially, seemed inexhaustible stores of intellectual wealth and enjoyment. I would often wander away, in these happy days of boyhood, book in hand, to the wildest and most solitary strand of that wild coast, on a fine summer-day, and there revel in such unalloyed happiness, in such pure enjoyment, that none other than young dreamers like myself can comprehend, ere all of heaven is chased away by the mists or the miseries of coming time.—Can any of the lore of age—of the pride of manhood—of the gratification of ambition or passion—can any, or all of these, compensate for the lost bliss and freshness of life's early morning?

CHAPTER IV.

Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe,
Our hermit spirits dwell, and range apart,
Our eyes see all around in gloom or glow,
Hues of their own, fresh borrow'd from the heart.

KEBLE'S *Christian Year*

My life was one scene of almost unclouded sunshine until about my fourteenth year. — Then the clouds began to lower; another, and far different scene, was about to open in life's fitful drama—more dreary did it seem in proportion to the brightness of the commencement.

At this period my father peremptorily announced that I must begin to do something for myself: his health, he said, he found to be failing from his arduous and trying employment, and that now I must try to assist him in getting our daily bread.

My mother had fondly hoped that with the savings of some years, which by her providence she had

hoarded, I might have been apprenticed to some trade that would have been in every respect superior to a life of labour in the mines ; this she urged on my father's acquiescence : but for once her influence seemed to fail ; he was deaf to her entreaties. "I have listened too long already," said he in reply to her earnest remonstrance, "to your foolish fondness for that boy—I have given up more than I ought to have done, in not putting him to work before now ; I will not part with my hard earnings, to apprentice him to a business, that probably he would not like, or attend to ; I have never heard him give even a preference for one : you have spoiled him for every thing by your tender rearing and book-learning—one would think you had forgotten he is a poor man's son, and has no right to expect to be better off than his forefathers were."

My poor mother was distressed and surprised at the tone of unusual harshness with which he spoke : seeing her distress, he added in a softened tone—but I do not pretend to give the Cornish idiom in which he spoke—You know I love the boy, as well as a parent need love a child, but I do not see any

reason why you should fancy he is above the honest labour *I* have pursued—you know we could not give him learning enough (at which you say he is so clever) to do him any good—the small share he has of it, in my opinion does him a great deal of harm, it disinclines him from industry or labour: however, work he must, if he would eat."

I heard this, to me, strange conversation, hitherto in silence. Afterward I had reason to believe my father was induced to speak as he did, from some influence being exerted, that was hostile to my mother: she, like many other persons who do not resemble those around them, was disliked because she was not understood. As soon as I could find voice from my chafing spirit, I said, "Father, you need not *insist* on my obeying you: I am willing to exert myself to the utmost of my power; get me a place to-morrow, and see if any of the ignorant clowns who have not been blest with such a mother as mine, *can* outdo me in manly exertion: I do not wish to live any longer a burden on you—for so I now see you consider me—I did hope certainly for a better lot, for an employment more suited to my strength and inclinations; and I now tell you

honestly, that, if it be ever in my power to better myself, I will do so, but for the present I submit to your will." My father did not seem displeased with my reply—he had expected effeminate weeping and remonstrance—the petulance of my speech was therefore overlooked, through its tone of spirit and resolution. " 'Tis well," he said, " you have determined like a man—but do not suppose I wish your strength to be over-tasked; at first you begin with the lightest kind of work."

Thus ended our conversation.

I got away as soon as possible to one of my solitary haunts; there, where I had been wont to indulge in youth's first delicious day-dreams—in gazing on this earth's loveliness, and deeming it almost a heaven—in taking pleasure in every, the minutest form of beauty—in drinking in rapture from the more magnificent scenes of nature—communing with old ocean in his majesty—and sympathizing in his power, grandeur, and profundity; there, where so much intense enjoyment had been mine, did I go to mourn over my unhappy destiny, to lament that henceforward there would be so little time or opportunity for reverie—that enchanted

ground where all those who possess the imaginative faculty are so prone to linger.

My dear mother fully shared in my chagrin—sore was her heart-ache, as she, many years after, told me—great was her disappointment, to think that her son, her pride, her heart's best treasure, should have to mingle with the herd of almost brutal companions, and toil in such an ignoble way, for his daily bread ! But, with her usual good sense and right feeling, seeing it was inevitable, she tried to bend her spirit to the trial, and made as light as possible of it to me—she did not *then* let me know how deeply she suffered on my account ; she tried to put my father's motives in the best light—she spoke, too, of the honourable feeling of independence, that ought to be cherished at my age—and of the possibility of being respectable in any employment, however lowly.

She did not warn me to shun the contamination of the society I should mingle with—she knew me too well to fear any danger from their contact—she rather counselled me to manifest as little as possible, any disgust at their coarseness, or scorn for their ignorance ; and after conversing some time with the

wisdom and tenderness peculiar to herself, she embraced me earnestly, and ejaculated a prayer, out of the abundance of her heart, for my future welfare and safe-keeping. I was subdued by her affection, and promised to do all, and be all, she wished and prayed for : " My own dear Mother," I remember saying, " come what will, I cannot be entirely unhappy while *your* love remains, while *your* fondness encourages me : I will let my father see that he was mistaken in supposing your tenderness had unnerved me for exertion — had disinclined me for industry : you shall not have reason to be ashamed of your son."

The next day, according to my father's decision, I was installed in my new employment—in a branch of the mining business, above ground, and generally done by youths and females. But the subject is too hateful for me to describe all the details of my daily labour — I will only dwell a little on my mental sufferings during the years that I was engaged in it—indeed, this narrative is rather a record of my *inward* than my *outward* life—external events are of consequence only, as they affect and act upon our *internal* being. I therefore dwell not more on them, than is necessary to illustrate

my mental state. And it was now any thing but a happy one. I detested, as I had foreseen, everything connected with my every-day employment.

And here it will be necessary to observe, that at the time of which I am writing, the state of morals and manners amongst the labouring classes, particularly the miners, was very different to what it afterward became, and is at this time—they were in general excessively ignorant, and extremely vicious; their manners were what might be supposed to proceed from their morals. Of course, there were some honourable exceptions—my father was one of them; he, and a few others, served to stem in some degree, the tide of general profligacy, and to oppose a moral restraint on the irregularity of the many. But it was not until after that wonderful man, John Wesley, came among them, and wielded weapons which subdued even their rebellious spirits, that anything like order or propriety of conduct appeared.

In such society as this, it may easily be imagined what a youth like myself must have suffered. There was not a single individual among those I necessarily came into daily contact with, that I could

choose for an associate, or with whom I could hold any intercourse.

They soon perceived and resented the difference that existed between us. Heavily was I punished for what they called my pride and haughtiness : every species of annoyance and coarse invective, was often resorted to, for the purpose of humbling me ; vexations too petty to be made the actual subject of complaint, and yet irritating and galling to a sensitive temperament like mine, were constantly practised on me ; and then last, but not least, the gross, brutal conversations that I must perforce hear, completed my misery, and increased my loathing.

This disgust at what I heard, prevented any moral contagion from its tendency—sin did not then, as afterwards, show itself as an angel of light, but, what it is in truth, an imp of darkness.

From such scenes and conversations, what a relief it was in the evening to return to my parent's peaceful dwelling—how peculiarly pure and refreshing seemed, then, the society of my beloved mother ; she appeared to my excited, harassed imagination like a being of a better and purer world. But to

her I breathed no complaint, I told of no grievance. I could not bear, for one thing, to vex her ; beside, a spirit of determined endurance had taken possession of me : my proud spirit was resolved to grapple with my fate, and bear to the utmost every misery uncomplainingly.

But inward repining and discontent began to gnaw at my heart's core. I even wickedly arraigned the wisdom and benevolence of Providence—my soul became the seat of fierce conflict and mental anarchy. This wretched state of mind came on about the third year of my dreadful bondage—for such I felt it—when the vague hope of better days was beginning to give place to black despondency. “ Why was I ever born ! ” would I exclaim in these moments of dark possession, “ why was I called into being without my own consent, to be thus a victim to despair and misery ! ” “ how could a benevolent Being permit any of his creatures to endure such a load of undeserved woe ! Has not my mother always told me that “ God is love”—a being of infinite benignity ? did I not, in childhood and early youth, believe this, as I looked abroad on the works of his hands, and tasted the happiness of my own

existence? Oh! why has such a dark change come over my spirit? why am I doomed to do daily what I hate—to witness hourly what I loathe—to associate with beings in the form of men, but with minds hardly raised above the brutes?

Yet why should I be so different to them? they are at least happier than I am—they are content with their degradation—they can laugh and jest, and sleep soundly, and enjoy *their* kind of existence—while *I* loathe mine, and fairly long to quit it! My mother would say, that I must pray for patience, for submission—alas! I know not how to pray, while I feel this dreadful doubt about God's care for the happiness of his creatures!"

Thus did my unhappy spirit vent itself in impious murmurs—thus "foolish was I, and ignorant"—fancying myself wiser and better than my fellows; and thoroughly despising their ignorance and rudeness. Far different were my sentiments towards them, when the humbling influences of the gospel had taught me my true character.

In the midst of this mental desolation, I yearned after something to love—somebody to sympathize with—for latterly, owing to my morbid state of mind,

I had become more reserved to my fond mother—not that I loved her less than heretofore; if possible, my admiration and affection for her had increased—she seemed to me the only being I ever knew, worthy of being loved and venerated. I was proud, too, of being *her* son; it seemed the only complacent feeling left, and to justify any opinion I had formed of my own superiority. But still the open and entire confidence that had subsisted between us was gone; for when there is one subject of reserve between two loving hearts, it must weaken confidence—it must alloy the sweets of intercourse: we both felt this—we were nearly silent on the subject that most occupied our thoughts—she, fearing that talking on the nature of my discontent, would but serve to augment it—I, as I have before said, because I could not bear to make her participate more largely in my misery.. I tried therefore to be cheerful in her presence, to make light of my trials. If that loving heart had known the extent of my sufferings, sure I am, she would have made some desperate effort to free me from my trammels.

However, in the darkest sky there are some gleams of light, some dawnings of a brighter day.

The buoyant spirit of youth did not at all times succumb within me. The trials of early life, though felt quite as intensely, do not bow down and prostrate the spirit, like those of riper years; or, as a French writer elegantly says, “au printemps de la vie, la souffrance est sans doute douloureuse—mais jusque dans cette douleur, perce encore la belle saison.”

In the midst of my depression, some presentiments of a happier destiny, in a far-off vista, would haunt me. Sometimes, too, shaking off my withering doubts, my aspirations would ascend to the Source of all good, for submission, for peace, for power to view him in the light of a friend, as well as Creator and Judge: these petitions were mingled perhaps, with much of error; but who can say they were not graciously heard and answered by that Being who heareth the “young lions, when, roaring after their prey, they seek their meat from God?” who, “openeth his hand, and they are *filled with good.*” The same beneficent Being must surely regard with mercy the prayers of his intelligent, though guilty creatures, even when mixed with much of ignorance, and darkness, and error—but

proceeding from an *earnest sense of need*—from a deep want of the heart.

And after these devotional moments, I did feel a calmness of mind, a patience of spirit, that otherwise were absent—and which enabled me to bear my burden with more of resignation to my lot.

CHAPTER V.

In his heart
Where fear sat thus, a cherished visitant
Was wanting yet—the pure delight of love.

WORDSWORTH.

Thus year after year, I toiled on—body and mind both being exercised, though the latter very undesirably—till about my twentieth year, then a change came over the current of events.

But before I proceed to this epoch, I will try to sketch the effect my unhappy position had on my character.

The peculiar and painful circumstances I was placed in, had induced and fostered a habit of self-communion and thoughtful contemplation, not very common in one so young: the *kind* of suffering I had to endure, helped—I cannot avoid thinking—to mature my mind, and strengthen the meditative faculty. I learnt to dive into the recesses of my own being, and question its nature and

attributes; I became in love with metaphysical speculations, without knowing any thing of the name or the science—if science that can be called, where almost all is hypothesis.

Instead of having my attention pleasantly diverted by the world *without*, I was compelled by my circumstances to seek for solace in the world *within*; I endeavoured to dig deeply there for hidden treasure—to work out the mine of thought. Sometimes, I well remember, when in a brighter mood, and when the demon of despondency had loosened his hold for awhile, I would exclaim with a feeling of exultation, “My mind to me a kingdom is:”—“borne down though I be, by adverse circumstance, yet I will not yield to the pressure, I will be independent of external things—I will endeavour henceforward to be self-sufficing for my own happiness.” A change of mood would soon convince me of the fondness and fallacy of my self-exultant reasoning—“Fool that thou art,” would then be my soliloquy, “to fancy that thou—a creature so dependent on sympathy—*could* be happy without it. I could verily almost cast myself on the human love of

these I despise, rather than bear this isolation of heart, this yearning after something to love."

No one can understand, except those who have experienced it, what amount of suffering I endured from this craving void within me. Beside the longing for intimate sympathy, I yearned too for the pleasures of intellectual society—I knew that there were in the world, from which adverse fate had separated me, many high and noble spirits; to commune with whom, I fancied, would be the height of bliss.

The few books I had read, only kindled a desire for a larger supply of mental food. I pined over my own ignorance, and want of means for information. My mother certainly possessed a considerable amount of knowledge for her opportunities—but what were the mere elements of a very limited range of subjects that she understood, to the unlimited ocean of which I thirsted to partake!

So, that I had, on every side, numerous causes for discontent and unhappiness;—but hitherto they were of a nature to excite rather than impede any intellectual vigour I might have possessed. How

long this would have continued to be the case, had not my character, pursuits, and occupations shortly changed their aspect, I cannot tell—perchance in the end paralysis might have succeeded despondency. At the time of which I am writing I thought not of this—every thing seemed against me—I was strangely unhappy, moody, and unthankful.

It was in this state of mind that I heard a rumour of the strange doings of a fanatical sort of preacher, who was turning most parts of England “upside down” by his sermons, which were generally preached in the open air;—he had been some time before in a distant part of our county, and now intended, it was said, to visit our more immediate neighbourhood. Two labourers from a distant mine, who had joined us, had heard him, and their honest, rough account of the effect produced by his preaching somewhat interested, and made me desirous to hear him myself: not but what I felt a certain degree of contempt for the proceeding—for I had begun, as before stated, to be sceptical and questioning, though feeling a deep need of the consolations of Christian faith. However, I determined to go to hear the preacher, whenever he

should come near us. At length it was announced by a duly authorized person, that on "Sunday next, John Wesley would preach in our parish—in the church, were he permitted ; if not, in the open air, in the most convenient place for hearing." I hailed the event with somewhat of pleasure, as breaking in a degree the leaden monotony of my life ; for our parish priest's sermons were neither edifying nor interesting—a mere enunciation of trite truisms of the most meagre morality.

I anticipated little, indeed, to instruct—but I wished to witness the effect of excitement upon others ; for I had heard that this man could move them almost at his pleasure. I went therefore as a critical spectator—little did I deem I should be either acted on, or influenced by, his eloquence. I asked my father to accompany me : he shook his head, and said he did not like to encourage such wild proceedings. My mother would have gone with me, but respect for her husband's objection prevented her. So alone I set off ; and what I heard that day considerably affected the destinies of my after life—would I could say the salutary influence had continued to the end !

CHAPTER VI.

"He was a man, whom it is more easy to admire, than worthily to describe ; he was one who, born in an obscure corner of the earth, enlightened the whole circumference by the lustre of his doctrine. Art fails, eloquence fails, in the vain attempt to determine which merits the greater praise—the number of his works, or the excellence of his discourses. Divine wisdom must have inspired him in no scanty measure, to have enabled him, in so short a period to produce so many volumes."—*William of Malmesbury's Character of the Venerable Bede, who died 735.*

In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
* * * * *

His mind was a thanksgiving to the Power
That made him :—it was blessedness and love !

WORDSWORTH.

THE site chosen for Wesley's first preaching among us, was a secluded bay, not far distant from the village. The sea had been for some time past receding from the strand, so that at high-water mark it did not nearly reach to the rocks that bounded the shore : a projection of one of these rocks, where

there was safe standing-space, and not too elevated from the ground, was marked out for the pulpit of the new preacher. It was almost as convenient as if made on purpose. The season was the commencement of autumn—that period of the year which so generally breathes of peace and repose.

When I arrived at the place of meeting, the scene was highly singular and impressive. The high rocks rose majestically in the back-ground, converging to the form of the bay—the everlasting ocean slumbered in front, as unruffled as if it en-cradled the spirit of peace—and a dense mass of eager, listening human beings were in the act of hearing words that would make their immortality palpable to themselves, and in many instances render them more worthy of it.

The scene altogether reminded me of what I had read of the stolen meetings of the Covenanters in the second Charles's time, when they sought out some wild and often picturesque place, where to worship God in safety.

When I arrived, the evening service was being read in a powerful, clear, and sweet voice by the

singular man, at whose bidding the people were convened—but at first I was so occupied and impressed by the sublimity of the scenery, and the novelty of the whole, that I did not particularly notice the preacher. I felt at once subdued and spell-bound, and the music of the voice of prayer seemed beautifully to harmonize with the distant ripple of the waves, and to assist and heighten my high reverie.

It was not till the hymn that preceded the sermon was singing, that I turned my attention exclusively to the preacher.

It requires a better limner than I, to attempt a portrait of John Wesley—good likenesses enough are there of him extant, and yet not one that can convey a faithful copy of what he appeared to me, the first time I saw him.

Art, how poor art thou! words, how weak are ye! compared to the living, vivid reality! He appeared then a man about forty-five—but of his exact age I am not certain: his figure alone was not striking—he was rather under the middle height, and size; his frame seemed vigorous and healthy, from temperance and exercise; but it was the face

that struck, and riveted attention ; the face—that portion of man, that speaks most of the divinity within : it were idle to analyze his features ; suffice it to say, they were severally good, but the mouth was peculiarly expressive—it denoted firmness, affection, and, above all, purity. The expression of the whole countenance was interesting in the extreme ; and no one could behold it, with unprejudiced eyes, without “turning to look again.” When I gazed on him for the first time, an indescribable feeling of sympathy and veneration seemed to link my heart to his, and in some way to foreshadow his future influence over me. “Surely,” said I, internally, “this man must needs be sent of heaven, for there is something about him that carries with it the evidence of inspiration.”

When he commenced the sermon, the attention of the people was breathless.

I still clearly remember that sermon, as well as my own deep impressions from it—it was delivered with simple earnestness, with solemn yet affectionate pleading, with winning persuasiveness, and with occasional bursts of powerful authoritative eloquence.

I can attempt no proper analysis, but I must notice a few of the leading ideas. The text was from the second chapter of Romans, the last section of the fourth verse. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance."—The sermon was divided in the natural order of the text: first, the apostle's announcement of the goodness of God was considered.

The preacher showed great knowledge of the capacities of his hearers, in handling this part of the subject; he did not enter upon metaphysical disquisitions of the character and attributes of Deity, but assumed at once the revealed fact—that God was a God of *goodness*. He strongly insisted on this view of his character; and that his hearers might recognize and understand this great truth, their individual experience and observation were appealed to: he drew an illustration of his goodness in creation, from the stupendous and magnificent natural objects, the work of God's hand, around, and pressing on our observation—and here he would have risen into poetry, but for timely checking himself, and proceeding with the more momentous truths that were to be enforced.

The grand crowning display of *goodness*—he went on to remark—was in the mystery of redemption; God being “in Christ, reconciling the world to himself”—and then “followed such a solemn, impressive view of man’s fallen state, and of his moral obliquity, that my whole soul was moved by the representation: from thence was shown the necessity for an atonement—a Restorer; and the “*goodness of God*” was exemplified by the fact of his “sending his Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the world.”

The second division of the subject went to prove how this Divine attribute was calculated to lead men to repentance;—and first was demonstrated the necessity for repentance—not only from the lapsed and sinful state of human nature, but from actual and tangible transgression—from men deliberately doing that which they know ought not to be done, and leaving undone that which they know they ought to do. The preacher, in a searching and powerful manner, commented on the more gross and scandalous sins, of which he knew many of his hearers had been guilty—he pointed out their turpitude; he demonstrated that they made men

miserable in this world, as well as amenable to the anger of God in the next:—he proceeded to minuter shades of transgression—he descended into the chambers of imagery in the heart—he laid open mine before me—he convicted me of pride, arrogance, unthankfulness, unbelief—an absence of the love of God and man, a questioning of his goodness, a contempt of his long-suffering and forbearance:—my mouth was stopped, and I laid it in the dust of humiliation.

I saw myself more guilty than the men I had despised, because I felt that my knowledge and advantages were so much greater than theirs.

But after fixing his arrows, he did not leave them to fester. He proclaimed that now, if any repented, they might find pardon—he insisted that at once, if any repented, and believed in the Redeemer's sacrifice, they might find peace.

I caught at his words as if they were literally words from heaven—they seemed to convey more than mere words could do—they appeared to breathe a spirit of life and power—or rather the Spirit of life and power applied them to my heart. I hesitated not to believe that even to me was this

consolation sent. I looked up adoringly to the Saviour of the world, and trusted for pardon and acceptance in his name.

No one can tell or imagine, except those who may have experienced it, the amount of deep emotion that affected my mind during that single sermon—the thrilling interest—the deep awe—the abasement of spirit—the consolatory, nay, joyful reception of the promises of pardon and peace. I seemed to have lived an age in that one hour—and if we measure life by emotion, by intensity of feeling, I had done so—it seemed as if scales had fallen from my eyes, and caused me to discern a reality, a beauty, a vitality in spiritual truths, of which I had no previous idea—nothing that had heretofore occupied my mind appeared of any importance in comparison. My whole being was absorbed in profound adoration, gratitude, and ineffable repose—my spirit seemed to unite in worship with angels and archangels round the throne—and with them to hold high and holy communion.

But how weak is language to convey that which passes within! what poor exponents are words, for

the soul's acting—well might the apostle speak of the *life* of the early Christians, as being a *hidden* one—as that which could not be entirely revealed without experience.

I was so absorbed in mental devotion, that I heeded not the conclusion of the service—the dispersion of the people. At length I was aroused by some one approaching, and speaking to me—I looked up, and recognized with pleasure the face of the preacher. "My son," said he, with the kindest voice, and a most benignant aspect, "you seem affected by what you have heard; perhaps it is the first time the simple truths of the scriptures have been thus expounded to you—at any rate, I hope it has been for your soul's good?"—It was as much as I could do, in reply to say, "Dear and venerated Sir, give me leave to inquire where I may have the privilege of seeing you to-morrow, for just now I can hardly arrange my thoughts sufficiently to tell you what I have this evening felt and thought." "I shall be most glad to see and converse with you," said he, "at any time you can conveniently call on me, during my short stay at ——." He then gave

me the address of a clergyman of that place, who acted in concert with him, and, giving me a parting benediction, we separated for the night.

Although so little passed, yet his manner tended to confirm the uncommon prepossession that I had felt towards him; there was something, it seemed, of fascination in it—but at that first interview, I considered not this, I chiefly regarded him in the light of an angel of God, come to introduce me into light, life, peace, and freedom.

I lingered still on that lonely shore, long after every one had gone home—but how changed was the whole current of my feelings! My gloomy distrust of God's goodness had given place to an adoring faith. My high opinion of myself, in comparison with others, had been exchanged for a deep humility. The indifference I had felt concerning the great truths of redemption, was succeeded by a believing appreciation of their efficacy and importance. The contempt and aversion that had been harboured for my ignorant compeers, had given place to warm benevolence, and longing for their highest good.

When I thought of my parents, my heart poured itself out in prayer on their behalf—and I felt for the first time, that I had been deficient in tenderness and reverence to my father ; I determined to correct this—I longed for him to participate in my present happiness.

But how shall I describe the ardent wish I felt, that my mother—my friend—my revered instruc-tress—the cherished object of my heart's best affec-tions—that she should share with me what I then deemed would be a perennial fountain of felicity ?

I hastened home full of these thoughts. I found my parents in some suspense at my absence. I related, simply and truly, a great part of what I had heard and felt—as I proceeded in my narration, and dwelt upon the impressions made by the preacher, my feelings, kindling with the theme, supplied me with language, that no doubt appeared extravagant and enthusiastic to an unmoved listener. My father at length interrupted me in the midst of the glowing account, with the chilling remark, that he thought I had been bitten by the Methodist madness, and he hoped I would no more attend their meetings, as he did not know where the extra-

vagaries would end. This pouring cold water on my newly kindled zeal, produced a very unpleasant revulsion of feeling; but the habitual silence with which I usually received his orders—that in great measure, heretofore, proceeded from sullenness and pride—now prevented any expression of disappointment or petulance, and gave me time to put my newly-acquired motives of duty in action.

I remembered that my conscience had been awakened to the necessity of yielding a more affectionate obedience to my father. Instead, therefore, of walking sullenly away, to brood in silence over his harshness, I ventured respectfully to expostulate with him. I represented, with more of calmness, that I had heard nothing wild or fanatical, or subversive of order or decorum—that Mr. Wesley had stated he would sooner have preached in the church, had the minister allowed him, but, being prevented, he was obliged to address the people where he could; that he upheld the church and its doctrines, and exhorted his hearers to be constant in their attendance on the services and sacraments. This and much more I urged, in order to make my father relent in his prohibition; but I told him,

that I had determined to adhere to his decision, be it what it may, as I considered obedience to him was a part of that duty which I hoped, in future, in some degree to fulfil.

My dear mother looked surprised and delighted at my altered tone; she had long grieved in secret at the estrangement between us; for ever since my father had prevented my being apprenticed, I had felt a sort of resentment towards him, evidenced in no other manner than by coldness and reserve.

My mother now joined her entreaties to mine, that before he forbade my attending the meetings any more, he would go himself to hear Mr. Wesley, and judge whether, or not, there was any danger to be found from his doctrines. Being pleased with the alteration in my tone and manner, he consented that it should be so—and that he would attend the next preaching, at any convenient distance.

When left alone with my mother, I poured out to her the fulness of my heart. I told her of the deep impressions I had felt—of my happiness—of the change in the whole of my views and feelings. I was heard with intense interest: but she could

not understand, how in so short a time such a transition should have been brought about. I could not explain away the objection, but I was confident of the fact: I felt as if there was a tangible reality in what I had acquired, that admitted of no questioning. I begged her to see Mr. Wesley, to talk to him on these subjects—above all, to pray for a demonstration to her spirit of the forgiveness and favour of God.

I said to her, “I know, dearest mother, you have long sought your happiness from higher and better sources than this world offers. I know you have feared, and wished to please, the great Author of your being; you have sought his fellowship and favour: to you, and such as you, then, is this freedom of access offered—even by a simple trust in the great atoning sacrifice, you may realize God as your father and friend.” I said more to this effect, that need not here be recapitulated. My mother was struck and interested—she acquiesced in my wish to see more of the man who had been the means of my thinking of these things—she blessed me that night with peculiar tenderness and energy, and we retired to our respective apartments.

CHAPTER VII.

" So long as the church is situated as it were 'upon a hill,' no man maketh question of it, or seeketh to depart from it; but when these virtues in the fathers and leaders of the church have lost their light, and that they wax worldly, lovers of themselves, and pleasers of men—then, men begin to grope for the church in the dark."

LORD BACON

THE sun seemed to rise the next morning with brighter beams than had for many years cheered my awakening. I had lost none of the happiness I had felt the night before; and when reading the holy volume that morning in my quiet little chamber, a new and blessed light seemed poured upon its sacred pages. I wondered at my former blindness, at not then perceiving the simple truth, beauty, and poetry of the scriptures. My thirsty spirit seemed to drink of their living waters, and be satisfied.

In the evening of that day, having obtained my father's leave to that effect, I set out, to endeavour

at procuring an interview with Mr. Wesley. I was fortunate in finding him just returned from his evening's preaching. He recognized me at once, and in the kindest and most encouraging manner, after a little time, led me to open to him the whole of my short history.

He told me that my appearance and manner on the preceding evening had made him suppose that I was in a somewhat higher station of life than what I had just informed him was actually the case ; he rejoiced with unfeigned joy at the impressions and convictions produced on my mind by his sermon—he exhorted, or rather entreated, that I would “hold fast that which I had received.”

He spoke of the state of the miners generally : he said, that from what he had both seen and heard, he concluded they were mostly very ignorant as well as depraved. He encouraged me to tell him what were my observations on the subject—he said that he longed to be the instrument of good to them—to awaken them to a sense of their spiritual wants—to christianize and thereby to civilize them—he said that there had been many among them who appeared deeply affected wher-

the simple truths of the gospel had been preached—many who seemed truly to repent, and determine on leading a new life.

He remarked, I must try, above all things, to win over my father to my present sense of religion—as, from what I had said of him, he would be a valuable example to the other men, for his previous fair character would have the more weight in influencing them.

He, further, “bid me prepare for opposition, and it may be persecution—for this he had experienced, and was enduring daily; that need there was to pray for courage, patience, forbearance, and prudence.”

Before the conversation ended, he asked me what books I had read; and appeared somewhat surprised at the enumeration, small as it was. I omitted not to state that the little I knew, the thirst I felt for improvement, the few books I possessed, the ability to read them—all, and every thing, I owed to my mother. I described her, as she was in truth, a superior woman—a woman who would have adorned any station of life—fulfilling her duty in the lowest. I spoke warmly, as my heart dictated, on this subject. I saw my venerated instructor’s eyes

fill with tears, as I dilated on my mother's worth ; and he said in reply, " Do not wonder I sympathize thus cordially with you, my young friend, when you speak so highly of your mother ; for God has graciously given me just such another, and I owe to her, under his blessing, the early bias for serious studies, that led me afterward to a more perfect knowledge of the gospel." No one can estimate or calculate, in this world, what amount of good, a sensible and pious mother may be the means of doing to her children, (to her husband likewise, supposing he is not of the same mind), by influencing their affections, and informing their judgments on the most important points. Let us both bless God for having given us mothers that command our respect, as well as affection."

I thought there was something in this speech inexpressibly kind and condescending — not that sort of condescension, that a mere man of the world bestows on an inferior, which is meant to be felt as such. Mr. Wesley talked to me as an equal, in all but age and experience.

Though he never in any degree wished to annul the proper distinctions of outward rank and station,

yet on many occasions where he recognized, not only a brotherhood of feeling on that subject, where all are necessarily treated on the equal ground of common humanity—but in tastes, pursuits, and sympathies—he then seemed to forget the mere accidental difference of situation, and spoke and acted with the most endearing familiarity. Not but that—as I afterwards had opportunity to observe—he knew how to assume, on proper occasions, the tone of authority, that in my opinion became his peculiar position. The man who knows how to rule, must likewise know how and where to unbend—his influence over other minds, is maintained by the silken bands of love, strained, when needful, into the firmer cords of authority.

Much more passed at this interview, that I omit to particularize; it tended, however, to confirm my unbounded esteem and admiration of this remarkable man. I wondered not at what I had heard of the personal attachment he was almost sure to attract, among all who came into actual contact with him—some of his most determined and savage opposers were suddenly tamed, and even won over, when they came within the circle of this mystic influence.

It was, perhaps, the potency of Christian love, which, extending itself to *all* God's creatures, magnetized, as it were, for awhile, even the most opposing elements among them.

Before we parted, he introduced me to the clergyman, at whose house he was staying ; he begged him to notice and regard me with favour. This gentleman was a devout and zealous man, who hailed with joy any symptoms of a revival of religion in the church, of which he was an attached minister. As Mr. Wesley was a brother in office, he gave him the right-hand of fellowship, though he was obliged to acknowledge his proceedings were not according to regular church-order ; but, he argued, there were certain crises both in church and state, in which some departure from the ordinary and generally safe routine of things, was not only allowable, but necessary and imperative : he instanced, in the latter case, the setting aside a legitimate king, who would surely have subverted the Protestant church, had he continued to reign—and to prevent this, nearly all good and wise men concurred in the *moral* necessity of the irregular succession of his Protestant son-in-law.

The present want of spirituality in the church, he went on to prove, required some extraordinary exertion of zeal—some powerful putting forth of energy, to arouse it from its lethargy, to call it back to its first principles, to enable it to assume once more its militant position—and if at first, the slumbering ministers of that church would not co-operate with a few of their own order—would not lend their churches for them to call on the people, with a voice of power and zeal, “to repent, and believe the gospel”—why, in such a crisis, and at any rate, he deemed it indispensable, that the high commission should be fulfilled, that the nation should be roused from their deep indifference to eternal concerns, and ignorance of spiritual truth—though the voice should sound even from the “highways and hedges.”

He certainly wished that the followers and preachers of Mr. Wesley might afterwards be incorporated with the church; at a later period he wrote to this effect: but difficulties arose that were deemed insuperable. If I may anticipate the progress of my own opinions—not that I think them of the slightest consequence—I should say, that I consider such a

step would have been a wise and right one. However, for many years I thought not this—and now I have more to do with regrets and repentance than opinions or strictures.

CHAPTER VIII.

" Il n'y a rien d'étroit, rien d'asservi, rien de limite dans la religion. Elle est l'immense, l'infinie, l'éternal ; et loin que le génie puisse détourner d'elle, l'imagination, dès son premier élan, dépasse les bornes de la vie, et le sublime, en tout genre est un reflet de la Divinité."

MADAME DE STAEL.

* " Then potent with the spell of heaven,
Go, and thy erring brother gain ;
Entice him home to be forgiven,
Till he, too, see his Saviour plain." KEBLE.

Soon after this interview with Mr. Wesley, my parents went to hear him preach. My father's prejudices were much softened, and he said that if he could hear such a preacher in a church, he would walk every Sunday many miles in order to do so ; but he could not quite get over the appearance of extravagance and want of order, the preaching out of a duly authorized place, evinced.

I could scarcely understand how such an idea could influence any one, it being, as I *then* considered, a narrow prejudice : however, our intercourse

was more frequent and affectionate than formerly ; he told my mother that as the Methodist preaching had so improved John's manners, he would not oppose his attending their meetings ; that he had not supposed it would have so improved him, but he was glad to say such had been the case.

There was a straight-forward honesty about my father's character, that always made him acknowledge any change of opinion, even when opposed to his one-sided view of things : a greater enlargement of mind could hardly have been expected in his circumstances : but few men had less natural obliquity in their mental constitution than he. I now began to feel a pleasure in endeavouring to converse with him—for he was rather taciturn—and win his confidence.

My reserved bearing towards the miners, too, was much altered. To those who had been beneficially influenced by Mr. Wesley's preaching, I particularly attached myself ; there was now a subject of mutual interest and sympathy between us—there was a common centre of attraction, which, while drawing each heart to itself, linked them also to each other.* It was an effect to be wondered at, and admired—

the evident amelioration that was so soon observable in the outward deportment and manners of those who had felt the softening and purifying influences of religion.

The grossness and depravity of their former conversation were entirely banished: this seemed to cost them no effort; the opposite tastes they had imbibed, appeared to have absorbed their vitiated ones—the new order of ideas they had received, necessarily displaced the old. There was no vacuum felt—superior objects of interest had more than compensated for the former—"old things had," indeed, "passed away." There was, in truth, much of ignorance remaining, many errors, many mistakes—but the purifying *salt* also remained, which prevented, ever again, the same degree of corruption and profligacy.

Soon began among us, as Mr. Weasley had foretold, a storm of opposition. We were assailed by those in authority. It was reported by them we were a set of pestilent fellows, whom it would be a duty to put down: the men who had not joined, or were not favourable to our views, were incited to oppose and molest us. The advice suited well with

the ferocity of some of their natures : they showed as much virulence as could have been desired, whenever an opportunity offered. But, like all opposition on account of religion, it did the cause good service. It increased the unanimity of those who acted in concert—it stirred up their zeal—it tried their constancy—it seemed an additional evidence to them, if any were wanted, that their opinions were according to the truth of the scriptures.

Mr. Wesley in a short time sent to our neighbourhood a young man in whom he had confidence, in order to teach and exhort those among us who wished to be more thoroughly instructed. The society was not at that time organized exactly as it afterwards was. The preacher's duty was to expound the Scriptures, endeavour to establish Sunday-schools, visit the sick, and instruct the ignorant.

As Mr. W. thought I might be of some small assistance to Mr. R. he sent by him a most kind and instructive letter, begging me, as far as in me lay, to co-operate with this good young man, and, above all, to assist him in organizing a school. I acceded to the request with ardour; I welcomed Mr. R.

with delight. I offered the whole of the leisure I had, and promised to devote all my energies, in what then seemed to me to be the highest and worthiest occupation of man—the seeking to promote the moral and spiritual good of his fellows.

I attached myself closely to this good and zealous young man—he lived very near us, and submitted to many privations and annoyances cheerfully, for the sake of the cause he had at heart. He was more remarkable for his piety and simplicity, than for any brilliancy of talent, or superiority of understanding—not that these were below par, but at that time I honoured and loved men more for their spiritual than their intellectual attainments.

As I was the only very young man near, who had been at all accustomed to read, and as my objects of interest were so much in unison with his, we became very intimate. A Sunday-school was soon formed, and we laboured indefatigably for the children's improvement.

Mr. Wesley had kindly sent me some books to read, and made a list of more, when I could procure them—they were chiefly on biblical and religious subjects, though not exclusively so. He wan-

pleased to say, he knew that I was endowed with superior abilities, and that it was a duty, as far as possible, to cultivate them—chiefly with a view to future usefulness.

Several evenings in the week were devoted by Mr. R. to expounding the scriptures, in a room hired for that purpose, to those who were willing to attend: there were generally present as many as the space would contain, and great was the attention that was paid, and the interest excited. I was always present on these occasions, and generally acted as a sort of clerk, or assistant—my mother mostly accompanied me.

After these meetings had been for a few months established, I received a note one morning from Mr. R., saying he felt himself so unwell, he did not think he should be able to attend the evening's meeting; that in case he did not, he begged me to supply his place, and to pray and read in the usual order, making at the same time my own remarks on the text. He entreated me to comply with this request, to consider it a call of duty, and not on any account to shrink from it: he said that many younger men had often been called to exhort

and teach others less instructed than themselves; he reminded me, of what he termed, the superior talents Providence had entrusted me with, and that I was bound to employ them in His service: he concluded with these words, "I call on you then, dear John, in your Master's name, to go this evening, simply trusting in his strength, and declare those truths to others, that have made you both rich and happy."

I was greatly moved on reading this note. I could not at once put it aside without due consideration. It seemed almost like a call from Heaven. But still I had weighty scruples and objections. I felt that I had no proper qualification or preparation to appear as a public teacher. I still retained too many high-church notions, for me to be able at once to adopt the opinion, that all men were actually called to preach the gospel, who fancied themselves so appointed: 'tis true, I acquiesced in the propriety of Mr. Wesley's proceedings in employing lay preachers; this, as he explained it, seemed to arise out of the peculiar nature of the case; but when the question came home to myself, I hesitated, and was undecided how to act. I felt gratified indeed, that Mr. R. had thought me

capable of what seemed to me a very arduous undertaking.

I went to him, and stated my objections. They appeared to him of no weight; he had never thought as I had on the subject, and could not apprehend my argument. Beside, he said in conclusion, "you are not called upon to exercise the regular duties and functions of a minister—you are only asked to assist in instructing the ignorant in the plain truths of Christianity, when you know those who are duly authorized neglect to do so."

I assented in great measure to this view of the subject, but again urged my want of preparation; and that I knew not whether I had any power of utterance, or capability of making myself understood. To these objections he replied, that I must simply do my best, and prepare myself by earnest prayer for that was the most effectual preparation.

However, I went to the meeting—not daring to stay away—undecided how to act. Mr. R. did not appear. One or two of the leading men urged me to supply his place. Tremblingly I complied.

At this period of my history, my first religious impressions were still vigorously alive—the flame of piety had then been neither damped nor dimmed—

the ruling principle of my life was an earnest desire to do simply and only the will of God: it now appeared to me to be his will, that I should speak in his name: an entire trust seemed to take possession of my spirit, that he would enable me to do so: I felt calm, and self-assured. We kneeled down, and I prayed, with simple fervour, for grace and ability: words seemed to flow without an effort—I paused not, nor faltered, until I had supplicated for the blessings we all stood in need of.

After the hymn was sung, I opened the Bible, and read the prescribed chapter; I then commented on the portions that called for exposition; this enabled me to dilate on some of the more important doctrines of the gospel: still the same facility of utterance continued—ideas came unbidden—deep emotions found vent in words—I spoke from the heart—the people were moved—and when I concluded, it was amid audible sobs and weeping.

After it was all over, I felt exhausted, and somewhat confounded, to think what I had undertaken and gone through.

Rough and honest congratulations poured in upon me—they unanimously gave it as their opinion,

"I was made for a preacher;" at last, in a corner of the room, I espied my mother—who was there unknown to me. She was soon congratulated on her son's first essay. None of the good opinions I had just heard expressed, afforded much gratification beyond the pleasure one must feel at the manifestation of good will. "These good folks," thought I to myself, "are no judges of what good preaching is—the simplest exposition of religious truth satisfies them, provided they see an accompanying earnestness; but as for a man's abilities, his talents, what do they know about them?" But the tearful yet almost triumphant glisten in my mother's eye, was to me a rich reward, and would have amply compensated me for even more laborious effort.

"My dear son," she said, when we were left alone to walk home together—"this night has richly repaid me for long years of anxiety—I have always known you possessed superior talents; but I feared my fondness might have exaggerated them—I feared, too, that in our lowly station they may have proved rather a curse than a blessing to you; but since we have experienced the blessed influence of religion, all adverse things seem to have changed their

nature—poverty is no longer a burden—a taste for knowledge seems but a higher step to usefulness. I can only express the extent of my gratitude to Him, who is the giver of these good gifts ; I feel to-night I have not lived in vain—the prayer of my heart has been answered—my son is, indeed, a blessing.”

The reply of my full heart to this outbreak of maternal affection, was poured out of its abundance ; it was one of those rare moments of full satisfaction, of which there are not many in this our earthly pilgrimage ; so,

—————“ From the sad years of life
We sometimes do short hours, yea minutes strike
Keen, blissful, bright, never to be forgotten

BABIIS,

CHAPTER IX.

— “ Such delights,
As flood to earth, permitted visitants !
When, in some hour of solemn jubilee,
The massive gates of paradise are thrown
Wide open, and forth come in fragments wild,
Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies,
And odours snatched from beds of amaranth,
And they, that from the crystal river of life,
Spring up on freshened wing, ambrosial gales ! ”

S. T. COLERIDGE.

At this epoch of my life, sunny prospects and cloudless skies for a long time prevailed. It has been my lot, throughout my mortal career, to experience almost, violent transitions from storm to calm, from gloom to radiance. I have seldom been long midway between happiness and misery: either perfect bliss or positive wretchedness have, for the most part been my portion—the excess of these states of mind must be attributable, in great degree,

no doubt, to temperament. At this particular period, existence had a high object and noble aim—it employed all my energies—it filled up the former vacuum of my spirit.

I must now endeavour at brevity in speaking of the next two years of my life; noticing, however, first, how it was I came to preach more regularly and frequently.

Mr. R. soon heard of my first successful effort: in the most disinterested manner he rejoiced at it; he persuaded me once more to occupy his place when he was present; he told me afterward, that he had been more pleased than he had even anticipated. He shortly wrote to Mr. Wesley, telling him of what I had attempted, and adding his own favourable comments: almost immediately followed in reply, one of his kind, wise, but brief letters, encouraging me to proceed—to do all the good possible—to improve my talents—to devote them all to God. He added a list of a few books, intended to strengthen more particularly the reasoning faculties, and some helps in biblical criticism.

Just at this period—as if every favourable circumstance conspired for my advantage—a relation

of my mother's died—one from whom she had no expectations, and who had never noticed her during her life-time ; however, she left her a small property in her own power ; and though to many persons it would have seemed trifling, yet to us, in our humble mode of living, it was of considerable importance.

She could now with propriety propose I should give up my daily toil, and look out for some employment more congenial to my inclinations and abilities—in the mean while occupying myself in the course of reading Mr. Wesley had pointed out. My father yielded at once to her wishes—he even acknowledged he had been mistaken in not long before acceding to them ; he said he now saw she had not been wrong in the opinion she had formed of me.

It was not necessary, either, that *he* should labour so unremittingly ; at this, both my mother and self rejoiced—but the legacy made no sort of difference in our manner of living, except that somewhat more hospitality was practised where it was needed.

I had now leisure for reading, and adding to my scanty store of information : my mother gave me a small sum of money, to purchase books—what

a luxury did it appear to be able to procure even the elements of knowledge!—I had likewise now ample opportunity for assisting Mr. R. in his endeavours to do good in the neighbourhood: we visited the sick together, and instructed the ignorant, and as much as possible laid ourselves out in the service of our fellow-men. In the meanwhile I kept in view the propriety of getting a definite employment as soon as one at all suitable presented itself. Thus time passed on fleetly enough for nearly two years.

Our little congregation flourished, and was augmented from time to time. Most of us attended the services of the Church on a Sunday, and there partook of the sacraments. Opposition gradually died away. The most violent opposers could not but see and acknowledge the evident reformation of manners among us.

There was preaching and expounding several evenings in a week, Mr. R. and myself alternately conducting the services. I found increased facility from practice, and took great pleasure in the exercise.

Every now and then I received a brief, kind letter from Mr. Wesley: he never forgot or neglected

any of his protégés or correspondents : it was quite wonderful the number of letters he wrote, notwithstanding his other numerous engagements.

One evening, about this period, I observed amongst our humble assembly, an interesting looking young man, in the garb and with the air of a gentleman : such a sort of person could not but be noticed, as, at the time in question, it was deemed a strange thing for any one in the upper ranks of society, to attend the Methodist preaching. Mr. R. prayed and exhorted that evening ; our new hearer seemed to listen with intense interest : however, he departed as soon as the service was over, and we saw him no more, till the next evening appointed for preaching.

It was then my turn to address the people ; and on that occasion I diverged a little from my original plan. I attempted a somewhat higher strain of discourse ; or rather I endeavoured to interest and enlist the understanding, as well as the affections, in the great truths of the gospel. I tried to show that there was ample ground for the most enlarged intellect to exercise itself on, in the sublime verities it reveals, and in the deep philoso-

phy that lies hid under its admirable simplicity—that while “wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein”—yet the genius of the most gifted may be ennobled and expanded by its reception. As this was a favourite view and theme of mine, I grew warm and energetic while trying to prove it—words flowed at will, and one idea elicited another.

After I had concluded, and we were preparing to say rate, the stranger-gentleman came up to us, and in the most urbane manner begged to introduce himself: he said he had been so much interested in what he had heard, that he could not resist the desire he felt for making our acquaintance; he told us he had only lately visited our part of the world, being on a visit to a widowed sister, a Mrs. Alison, who lived within a mile or two of our neighbourhood—that he had heard much talk throughout England of the wild and strange doings of the followers of John Wesley—that he determined, in consequence, to attend one of the meetings as soon as he conveniently could, that he might judge for himself of the merits or demerits of that which had caused so much sensation and conversation. His sister, too, had wished him to come to our place

of meeting, as she was somewhat favourably inclined in our behalf, from noticing the improved demeanour and condition of the miners and their families, who lived near her own domain, and who, whenever questioned on the subject, ascribed all their improvement to their attending, either Mr. Wesley's preaching, or his coadjutors.'

He moreover added ; "Though I was somewhat disposed to think, on the whole, favourably of your cause, yet I certainly expected to hear a good deal of rant and cant, and appeals to the passions of the uneducated; but I must own, in this instance, I was completely mistaken. in the first place, I heard a plain and earnest sermon, on the most important doctrines of our faith; in the next, this evening I have listened to a discourse that would have done credit to a member of either of our Universities; but I will not attempt to tell you how much I have been interested.—I crave your name and residence, Sir," addressing me more particularly; "with your leave, we will soon be better acquainted."

I was utterly confounded by this most flattering and unexpected address. I had been so little used

to be spoken to, or converse with persons of superior education and polished manners, that my colour mounted high, and my awkwardness betrayed itself, at so unusual a circumstance. I stammered out a confused reply; but there was so much high-bred ease combined with so much christian benevolence in my new friend's manner, that it quickly restored my self-possession. I then told him my name, and where I lived; adding, my lot in life was a very humble one, for that, until lately, I had earned my bread by daily toil.—As I made this confession, which I felt due to his frankness and implied confidence, I blushed still deeper, and felt a rising of pride, that I had supposed to have been for ever subdued: for a moment, my old disgust at my humiliating position in society revived.

After a passing look of surprise at the information just given, he replied, "You have done well in being so candid—do not suppose my desire for your acquaintance is weakened by it: I have long been convinced that talent and worth are not confined to any sphere of life; often existing most vigorously in the humblest; but it would be more suitable that you should toil rather with your head

than your hands---in future your friends must endeavour that it shall be so. I will, if agreeable, call to-morrow at your cottage, and then we can converse more freely."

I expressed my delighted acquiescence, and we parted.

Mr. R. in the most generous manner congratulated me on the favourable impression I had made, and spoke of the desirableness of winning over to our cause, a person of so much apparent weight and influence.

I went home, and told my parents of my *rencontre*; they naturally rejoiced at hearing any thing so much to their son's advantage. My dear mother was particularly sanguine in her auguries of the possible future benefit my new acquaintance might be to me.

The next day, our cottage, which was always neat, orderly, and comfortable, was arranged with more than wonted care: glasses were filled with fresh flowers, and several other little feminine ornamental arrangements were made, that only a woman of taste knows how to effect.

Our expected guest was punctual to the appointed

hour. He at once put me at ease, by expressing warmly his admiration for our cottage, its garden, and situation—it was so near the sea, and commanded such a bold view of it. He soon adverted to the preceding evening—he talked too of Mr. Wesley—he asked me what were my impressions of his personal character, his talents, the doctrines he preached, &c. &c.

I soon found myself able to be quite natural and free with him. His seemed to be the first truly congenial spirit I had yet met. The sort of regard I felt for the venerated man above named, was altogether of another quality—it was deep veneration mingled with gratitude. The friendship subsisting between Mr. R. and myself was composed principally of esteem—the raw material of our minds differed essentially. But here seemed a man, who, but for our different stations in life, I could have hailed as a friend, and brother-spirit. He appeared to be, from his conversation, a man of thoughtful piety, and of more enlarged views on the subject than it is usual at any time to meet with. His mind was evidently of a very superior order, and well balanced withal; imagination and judg-

ment kept their respective places; though of the former there was a sufficient quantity—this I soon knew from his speaking of poetry and poets.

Before we parted, he made an offer of lending me any of his books, nay, he urged my acceptance of some of them:—he invited me to call on him at his sister's residence at Mount Bank, as soon as I conveniently could, as he only intended remaining there during the Cambridge recess, where, he told me, he would soon take out his degree. I said I should be but too happy to improve his kind notice. And we separated, mutually (as I flattered myself) pleased with each other.

CHAPTER X.

“ Learn by a mortal yearning to ascend
Towards a higher object. Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end ;
For this the passion to excess was driven,
That self might be annulled : her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love.”

WORDSWORTH.

I now approach another important point in my history—before entering on it, a few remarks must precede.

It may seem strange that in this record of my inward life, professing, as I do, to lay open the principal emotions of my soul, and to investigate the springs of thought and action, that I should have yet made no allusion whatever, to one strong tendency, that influences the lives of most men, particularly in their youth, either for good or evil—I mean, of course, the passion of love.

The truth is, that up to this period I had never been in love, but with ideal beings.

Before the happy change in my views and character, I had been almost consumed by the "*besoin d'aimer*,"—by the hopeless search after some "fair spirit," on whom I might lavish the pent up stores of my affections. I looked around on the coarse unpolished beings of flesh and blood by whom I was surrounded ; and though sometimes I tried hard to invest one or two of the most comely of them with the attributes of my imagination, it would not do—some grating Cornicism, or some coarse vulgar remark, would at once dissipate any incipient illusion, and would convince me of the impossibility of even attempting to love any of these.

I remember, indeed, when a little boy, during my permitted visits at the "great house," being so presumptuous as to enshrine the eldest Miss Ormsby, a few years my senior, in my heart's sanctuary. She appeared to my young imagination like a magnificent houri, whom it was felicity enough, to see and idolize at a distance : whenever it happened, she in the slightest degree noticed me, I would blush, and almost tremble with emotion. After

I had ceased to go there, I long retained her image in my heart's core; but at length she married, and then perforce I gave up her worship.

After religion had become the ruling principle of my life, the void in my affections seemed filled, and satisfied; not that, in any degree, I thought it incompatible with its nature, to have entertained the most exalted and tender kind of sympathy with a suitable being of the gentler sex, had such come in my way; but as that was not the case, I dismissed such thoughts from my mind, being daily occupied in what engrossed my undivided interest and attention.—But this is a digression, and I proceed in my narrative.

The lady that Mr. Allein—for that was the name of my new friend—spoke of as his sister, I had heard mentioned as a person of wealth and benevolence, who had resided but a few years on her property in Cornwall. I had occasionally met her in my daily walks, but had noticed her no more than I should any other lady of the land, so far separated from any chance of intercourse with me: it was not, then, from any feeling of consciousness, or presumptuous hope, as it related to Mrs. Alison, that

I felt the tremulousness of my nerves, as I approached her domain, and knocked at the door of her very handsome house.

I was ushered into the library, where were sitting Mr. Allein and his sister; he introduced me to her, as the young man he had mentioned a few days ago, and said he had availed himself of the permission she had given him to ask me to her house. She made a most courteous and ladylike reply, and then soon glided out of the room.

I felt something like regret and annoyance at the short stay of Mrs. Alison; it was long enough, however, for me to discover an inexpressible charm about her person and manners, though it scarcely allowed me time to analyze the cause of it.—Few persons would have called her beautiful, yet none, perhaps, would have refused their admiration: there was nothing striking or piquant about her; but afterwards I discovered the fascination consisted in her being so thoroughly feminine and graceful. A gentle self-possession, that imparted to her manners and bearing an almost divine repose, which diffused something of its own tone and hue to those who came within its influence, made me compare

her presence to that of the peaceful halcyon descending from above, calming and hushing the strife of the tempestuous billows.

Now I have begun to write of this incomparable woman, I know not in what order to proceed. I am obliged to restrain my pen when thinking of her, or I should dilate for pages on her many excellencies. I will proceed briefly in tracing the progress of our intimacy.

That day I saw no more of the bright and gentle being, who had for the first time gleamed a ray of gladness o'er my path.—I exerted myself, almost unconsciously, with greater effort, to interest and secure her brother's good opinion. We talked of books and literature. I listened with eager interest to his remarks and judicious criticism: he recommended me a course of reading on church-history, pointing out the most accurate sources of information on the subject.

Various was the matter we discussed—wide was the mental field we traversed on that delightful morning. Some vague but delicious sensation gave impulse to my faculties, and excitement to my imagination; beside, I experienced that exquisite feeling

of mutual confidence and generous appreciation, that one so seldom meets with in general intercourse : in such cases of unfettered communion, we may indulge in complete *abandon*—one is not afraid of being misunderstood, or misrepresented—thought flows freely, and often brilliantly, in such intellectual sunshine—there are no shadows of envy or dullness, to dim its brightness, or to check its o'erflowings.

So I experienced during the hours that sped so fleetly away in Mr. Allein's society. A message was sent before I left, from the mistress of the mansion, inviting me to dine with her brother. I felt it would be proper to refuse, and not so far trespass on their condescending kindness. Mr. A. understood my motives, and did not press it.

In a day or two after this interview, Mrs. Alison came with her brother to our evening meeting. It was again my turn to preach ; and with some trepidation I noticed their arrival ; but quickly calling to mind the high and solemn motives that induced me to be where I was, and offering up a ~~mental~~ prayer for power over every inferior emotion, I soon regained complete calmness and even abstrac-

tion: I felt with renewed energy the engrossing nature of my Christian principles, and the deep responsibility attached to the attempt of publicly enforcing them. Soon everything was forgotten but these solemnizing thoughts; the singleness of my aim made itself felt, and deep and breathless was the attention manifested. Mr. R. told me afterward he had never heard me preach so impressively,

My new friends did not stop that evening, to have any conversation. I had expected they would have done so: disappointment and languor for a time usurped my better and holier emotions, but I combated and overcame the unworthy weakness.

I pass over many of my succeeding interviews with Mr. Allein. One day, before he left Mount Bank, he invited myself and Mr. R. to spend the evening there—he said, at his sister's request. We went accordingly; she was present, and presided at the tea-table; and then, for the first time, we conversed freely together, and I had ample opportunity of forming a deliberate opinion of her *tenue en semble*.

She looked about twenty-eight years of age:

the first bloom and flush of youth had given place to the riper grace and dignity of womanhood ; her person was in perfect keeping with her mind—peace and purity seemed their leading characteristics : she was pale, quite pale, except when she spoke, and then a slight tinge of colour would mantle over her expressive countenance ; her mild eyes were of the deepest blue, and her mouth in perfect harmony with the other features ; her figure was somewhat above the middle height, but too thin to be generally pleasing. She had been married when quite young—not very happily, as I afterwards learned. Mr. Alison had been dead now about four years. She was dressed plainly, but elegantly,—good taste and simplicity had dictated its arrangement.

We soon cast off the reserve of the first few minutes, and, emboldened by her ease of manner, my awkwardness, and somewhat of confusion, disappeared. I exerted myself to talk, to converse, so as to secure her approbation.

She spoke approvingly of what she had heard at our humble place of meeting—of the great and beneficial change that had been brought about

in the country by Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors' preaching--of the lively interest she felt in the revival of religion throughout the land. She said how much she wished to see and converse with the remarkable man who had acted such a leading part in this good work, and begged that I would bring him to her house the next time he visited the neighbourhood. She spoke on these subjects like a person of serious and enlightened piety; the language she used was free from all those technicalities and shibboleths that are so often mingled with the genuine expressions of religious feeling.

Mr. Allein for the most part conversed with Mr. R., so that I had the unhoped-for felicity of almost wholly engrossing Mrs. Alison's conversation.

In the course of the evening, her brother asked her to give us some music: instantly she complied; saying, she supposed we should prefer some sacred pieces. She sat down to her harpsichord; her brother accompanied her on the flute, while she sung and played some of the finest sacred melodies of that day.

It was the first time, since I was a mere boy at the Ormsbys, that I had heard a lady's voice

and performance. I was at this period scarcely twenty-three, and had lost none of the ardour and romance--though it was tempered--of my first youth. Here was a being before me, that I thought literally angelic--any original defects, incident to our fallen nature, corrected or eradicated by the great restorative: here she was veritably present before me, her sylph-like form sitting gracefully at the instrument, eliciting from it seraphic sounds; her sweet voice attuned to the praises of high heaven: it was to me, indeed, the "music of the spheres!" Wonder not, nor blame me, that I was entranced and ravished, spell-bound and fascinated, as I gazed and listened: sight and soul were absorbed in one delicious dream--my old habit of reverie returned, but having in it more of the happiness of "waking bliss," of tangible reality!

"At length the entrancing sounds ceased. I almost started when I heard myself addressed. I tried to shake off the spell--but it would not do. I could not again freely converse; I longed to be alone, that my swelling heart might be relieved by tears.

The conversation naturally turned upon music. Mr. Allein spoke well of the intellectual pleasure it

was capable of affording—of the hidden emotions it has power from their depths to call up—of the soothing effect of some of its combinations—and, most of all, the excitement and expression it gives to devotion. I listened in silence to these, and other remarks, chiefly carried on between the two gentlemen.

Mrs. Alison did not again say much—the spirit of conversation seemed departed from her as well as from myself. A few times our eyes met; I fancied, and then blamed myself for the fancy, that in her's there was an expression of complacent sympathy, of ineffable, mystic understanding; once or twice, too, there was the same slight mantling of colour observable as when she spoke.

When we parted for the evening, Mr. R. held out his hand almost simultaneously with herself. I trembled so much, I could not do it, but merely bowed my adieu, and hurried out of the house.

My companion was pleased with his visit, and, full of talk; he seemed to wonder at my taciturnity. Amongst other remarks he made, was one that he thought Mrs. Alison a very nice, amiable, affable person.—I could have quarrelled with him for every

one of these epithets, and could not restrain myself from saying—" How is it possible you can employ such terms in speaking of so superior a creature? You talk of her as if she were a mere commonplace woman! My dear friend, I envy not your coldness, though I wonder at it!"

" And I, on the contrary," said he in a somewhat surprised tone, " envy not your romance. But, my dear John, do not be so absurd and presumptuous as to think of falling in love with Mrs. Alison."

" I should as soon think of falling in love with one of the princesses of the blood," I answered in pique: " but surely it would be a want of virtue not to admire, ay, fervently admire, such a woman as that; and I pity the man who fails to do so."

" You would be even more annoyed with me, I fancy," said he smiling, " if I were to rave about her as you do;" " however, my brother, (for so he sometimes called me,) you will be more reasonable to-morrow, and for to-night we'll part in peace."

CHAPTER XI.

" But, lo ! a moment of more glad surprise !
Each spirit saw its second self arise ;
That kindred soul, which like a lovely tone,
Echoed each thought—each feeling of its own :
In which its deep emotions were impressed,
Though in a robe of purer lustre drest.

MS. Translation of Richier's "Dream."

THAT night my devotions were -disturbed, my thoughts wandering ; I again and again asked myself why it should be so?—there was nothing in the deep commotions of my spirit, that I could fairly consider sinful. I scarcely ventured to imagine that there was any thing beyond the warmest esteem and admiration, in my feelings towards Mrs. Alison, she was so far separated from me by rank and circumstance—so utterly above all I could reasonably hope to approach familiarly : and yet she talked to me as an equal ; there was not even a tone of condescension in her manner ; she almost asked my opinions on various things, as if she thought I could

inform and instruct her. How I wished she had been less rich—less hopelessly removed from my own sphere of life ! Yet, even if it were so—said I to myself—what an idiot I must be to fancy she should ever think favourably of me—what claims have I to her regard ? But in spite of these reasonings, a vague hope would linger, that at least she regarded me with something like friendliness and favour.

I must not linger on many of the details of this my first happy and virtuous affection. It will have been seen that I felt, thus early in our acquaintance, a deep and tender love for Agnes Alison. For a time I struggled manfully against yielding to its power ; and, no doubt, should have at length conquered myself, had not circumstances convinced me that it was reciprocated. When I first was fully persuaded of this delightful fact, my joy knew no bounds ; according to the fashion of my nature, I was overwhelmed with bliss ; my full heart could only find vent for its ecstasy in audible thanksgivings, and I retired to my room as soon as possible for this purpose. The only drawback to my felicity, was the idea that I must receive so much, and

confer so little; I ventured one day to remark this to my Agnes.

"I thought," said she, in reply, with something of reproach in her eye, "you, my dear friend, had a mind above these mere vulgar considerations—of what advantage are the goods of fortune, without some congenial mind, some second self, to share them with us? Can wealth purchase augm but hollow flattery, or time-serving obsequiousness? Do not wrong me by supposing, I even for a moment imagined but that it was myself, and not my fortune and lands, that attracted your regard: but could I thus think, of the generality of the men I met with? did they not openly proclaim their love of the world, and what the world calls precious?—how could I then suppose that they would prefer me for myself? But you—you have a nobler ambition than this poor world's favour; you are influenced by altogether other and higher principles."

"You do me at least but justice, dearest and best," said I, "in believing that it was *yourself* alone that attracted the sincere homage of both my heart and understanding; and I feel that you are one of the very few women living, that a man *may* be

content to receive so much from, without feeling himself burdened and oppressed by the obligation ; but what, indeed, is all you can bestow, in comparison with the gift of your 'gentle heart, your love for me ?—Oh ! Agnes, I feel too rich and happy ' I sometimes almost tremble, lest, after all, such a rare cup of felicity may be dashed from my lips !'" " You forget for a moment your Christianity, dear friend, I fear, in talking thus bodily ; has not our gracious God given us, together with the blessings of redemption, all other good things, richly to enjoy ? would you stint the bounty, that delights to bless with so liberal a hand ? let us but acknowledge Him in all our ways, and, strong in trustful faith, we will expect yet greater things than these ; even, that we shall enjoy each other's society in brighter worlds, and for ever !"

I could not reply, nor was I ashamed that my tears should mingle with her's, as I pressed her dear hand in mine. We sat in the embrasure of a window that commanded a view of her delightful lawn, and a grove of trees at its extremity ; the ocean could be seen in the distance, as the house was on an elevated site ; the setting sun was then shedding his glories over the landscape ;

the air was calm, and all nature, in her serenest mood, appeared to sympathize with our overflowing hearts—we were quite silent—our spirits seemed to commune, without the aid of words. There are times when one *feels* their utter inadequacy to express the soul's emotions.

My Agnes had requested, at an earlier period of our intimacy than this, to be introduced to my mother. How exultant was I, that I had such a mother for her to love—to appreciate as she deserved! and I knew two such kindred spirits would soon coalesce. But though there were important points of union between them, there was enough of diversity in their characters, for any parallel lines to prevent an union. My mother had more native strength of understanding, and energy of will, than Agnes; the former quality was indeed of masculine force in her. Agnes had just as much intellectuality, that I conceive a *perfect woman* ought to have: her will, too, was naturally yielding, and subject to be influenced, except in cases where conscience was at all implicated; then she was as firm as if her will and determination had been of iron mould. But this fascinating gentleness it was, and

a certain timid distrust of her own powers, that made her seem to me a perfect specimen of what men love in woman. Her taste was pure, and highly refined—poetry she felt as none do, but those of a poetical nature. All pure and lovely things were loved by her with a child-like admiration. Flowers she doted on ; and if she ever were in the slightest degree extravagant, it was in purchasing rare specimens for her conservatory. My mother had been prepared to love her from my representations ; but she deducted much from them—as she told me afterward—on account of my strong prepossession ; however, after they had met, she pronounced that Mrs. Alison had exceeded her expectations. How rich was I, in the undivided love of two such hearts ! Oh ! bliss too great to last ! felicity too pure for any very long continuance in a world where the serpent has intruded ! Surely Adam, in his primeval estate, was not happier or more blessed than was I !

In a year from our first acquaintance, Agnes had consented to become mine. When she had fully determined on this step, she wrote to her brother to inform him of her intention, and to hope he

would be present at our union. To her surprise, she received an answer full of objections to the proposed alliance, and entreating her to pause ere she finally contracted it. His reasons were, of course, my unequal rank in society—what the world would say of such a proceeding—and my being some few years younger than herself. He admitted my personal merits—what he was pleased to call, superior talents—and, as far as he could judge, my moral worth.

I went to see her, as was my wont, the evening of the day she received this letter. I instantly perceived a shade on her placid brow; she tried to rally her spirits, and received me even more affectionately than usual; I immediately conjured her to tell me the cause of her uneasiness—for I knew there was some: “I do not like to vex you, my dear friend,” said she in reply, “but as there should be no concealments between us, I must let you know the cause of my disquiet.”

She then put her brother’s letter into my hand, to read. I paused a few minutes after finishing it, before I replied; and then said,

“I do not wonder, dearest Agnes, at your bro-

ther's objections; they are, as you know, those I have often urged against myself, except, indeed the last; and that seems too futile to need any consideration; but, perhaps, he has placed the subject in a different and clearer light before you, than I have done: weigh well, I beseech you, Dearest, what he says—don't let him suppose I could be base enough to take advantage of your generous confiding affection, and induce you to act contrary to your future happiness and ultimate advantage.—But why do you look so reproachfully at me, my own love? surely, surely, you cannot suspect me of any sinister motive, when I am pleading against myself! and (if you acted as your brother wishes) concerting with him, to sign the death-warrant to my all of earthly happiness?"

As soon as Agnes could speak for her tears, that flowed fast and silently, she said, "Let it be the last time this subject is ever spoken of between us; I mean, the conventional differences in our outward situation. My brother is several years younger than myself; he was loved and fostered by me, when our dear mother died, and he wanted love and care; I owe him then no duty, except the truly

sisterly affection I shall ever bear him, let his conduct in this affair be what it may; but as to being for one moment influenced by his mere worldly reasonings, you do not, cannot surely think me so weak and vacillating. I regret, indeed, for his own sake, that he does not rejoice to hail you as a brother, and feel himself ennobled by the connection. I can have no sympathy with his aristocratic prejudices: I have seen too much of what is called the great world, not to know—with some rare exceptions—its exceeding littleness."

"Your sentiments, my dear friend, are too noble and disinterested to be understood and appreciated by but few other minds," said I; "they would call them romantic and enthusiastic, and subversive of the proper order of society." "It may be so," said she, "I am willing to endure the taunt, nor should I feel it galling. I know, as I said before, by experience, the *very* emptiness of all that the world calls good and desirable. I was too long *in* that world, though not exactly *of* it, for me not thoroughly to understand of what stuff 'tis made: even before I knew much about the rich provisions of the gospel, I felt, and pined under the utter falseness of its promises; I longed

to breathe a purer atmosphere, to taste simpler pleasures: they had, indeed, once persuaded me to attempt the task of extracting happiness from wealth and influence. I did so, and it failed: wonder not then that I feel a more than common contempt for the reasonings of my brother, and those who judge like him; though I cannot but marvel that *he*, who has learned in a better school, should judge as a mere worldling would."

"I think I can understand better some of the feelings that influence your brother,—~~near~~ one," said I: "he has been reared amidst what you just now called 'aristocratic prejudices': he thinks it, therefore a part of his duty to uphold a certain order of society; and in this, perhaps, he is quite right: he knows, too, that unequal marriages are often productive of much discontent and disquietude—but he makes no proper exception to these rules; and therefore is it, that he writes as he does."

"You are very kind, and perhaps right," said Agnes, "for putting my brother Henry's objections in this favourable light: if, indeed, he had known I had not wealth enough to support me in my new position, as I have been accustomed to live, I should not think of blaming him—do not imagine my con-

tempt for money carries me far enough, to suppose it would be proper for any one to marry without a sufficiency of it. I shall be glad, too, to get rid of the burden of attending to the details of business I do not well understand. I have more property now, than I know what to do with, with my simple habits and tastes : you, dear friend, must help me to spend it more worthily. I have not patience, however, with Henry, who knew you, not making—even allowing for his prejudices—an exception in your behalf."

Agnes wrote to her brother immediately, and pleaded my cause most eloquently ; her devoted affection gave energy to her pen. I have a copy of that most flattering letter ; but I forbear to copy it, as it is full of the favourable view she took of my character. She had never loved before—after our marriage, she confessed this to me—her first union had been made in obedience to her father's wish, and when she was very young. Mr. Alison could not appreciate his wife—he was a cold man of the world—he did not treat her positively ill, but, after a short time, with great neglect and indifference : she tried in vain to win his affections, but he had none to give : he lived wholly and solely for him-

self, and supposed every one else did the same.—He took her to London, and introduced her to fashionable society, though not of the most intellectual kind. In such an ungenial soil she soon pined, and was glad to return to their seat in Devonshire, where she employed her time chiefly in attending to the early education of her young brother. Some short time before Mr. Alison's death, he became connected with some of the tin-mines in Cornwall, and purchased the estate on which Agnes now lived. After she became a widow, she wholly resided here, and lived a very secluded life; very few of the surrounding gentry being such as she wished to be on intimate terms with.

I wrote myself to Mr. Allein; and said but little else, than that I wished he would come to Cornwall before our marriage took place, to influence Agnes about the settlements. She, with a true woman's generosity, would not hear of the property being settled on herself. I appealed to her brother accordingly—he wrote to her again, saying that he felt he had no right to dictate to her—that he hoped her present determination would be for her ultimate happiness; but that she would be acting

the part of a child, not to have proper settlements made. At length she consented to have half of her fine property left in her own power—more she would by no means hear of.

As soon as this was arranged, I wrote to my revered friend, Mr. Wesley, to tell him of my bright prospects; and to invite him, at Agnes' request, to be present at our wedding. He wrote me back one of his characteristic letters, only rather more admonitory than usual—he bade me beware of the snares of my present situation, to pray more than ever for humility, and not to expect *too* much from my wife—to prepare likewise for matrimonial discomforts. This was after his own calamitous marriage, and at the very time his extraordinary, if not insane wife, was, in such a painful manner, putting his patience and Christianity to the proof: therefore I wondered not at his premonitory tone; though I smiled, in happy confidence, that in my case there would be not the slightest need of such kind of warnings. He said also that it would be out of his power so to time his visit to Cornwall, as to be present at our wedding; but that he intended visiting us when he next came to the neighbourhood.

CHAPTER XII.

"A blooming lady—a conspicuous flower,
Admired for beauty, for her sweetness praised ;
Whom he had sensibility to love,
Ambition to attempt, and skill to win."

* * * * *

— "How full their joy,

How free their love ! nor did that love decay,

Nor joy abate !"

WORDSWORTH.

The day at length dawned, that was to crown my cup of earthly bliss. Agnes and I became one, in mind, body, and estate. Never was there a more perfect union of heart, principle, and pursuits. The delirious joy I should otherwise have felt at this consummation of my happiness, was chastened down by the tranquillizing influence of religious feeling. I loved Agnes with a sort of holy love. I looked up to the Fountain of all love, for His favour and blessing on this new relation, and tried to regulate my affection for her, in subservience to

His higher claims. At this period my devotional feelings were warmer, and more entire, than they had been for some while previously. The tumults and agitations of courtship had settled down into the calm certainty of "waking bliss." The Being I would have chosen beyond all other females—had the choice being given me—was mine, irreversibly mine! The holy calm of matrimony soon diffused itself over my spirit. I almost wondered at my own tranquillity. The happiness I now felt, was something different to any other kind I had ever experienced—it was a sense of deep peace—of unruffled repose—of undoubting confidence—of fulfilled hope: and yet, there was no stagnation, no satiety; for hope still plumed her wing heavenward; imagination yet exercised herself on unseen and future revelations; and there was ever at hand one "fair spirit," one mild, yet energetic participant in all these high and noble excursions of the spirit. I saw and felt, (how deeply did I feel!) the wisdom, beauty, and purity of God's ordinance of marriage.

We both set out with a determination to do as much active good as we conceived was our duty to

attempt: we neither of us felt inclined to rest in a mere sentimental religion, or a theoretic benevolence. Agnes wished me still to continue occasionally to preach in the neighbourhood: she shrank not from the odium of its being said, she was married to a Methodist preacher. Some of her friends suggested that I should study for the Church, and get ordained; but I then thought—and Agnes took the same view of the subject—that I could be more useful by remaining where I was, and trying to carry on the work of christianizing the miners. They generally listened to my exhortations with respectful attention, and justly thought I could more entirely sympathize with them, than any stranger; I understood the outward hardships of their situation, their perils and their toils.

There are other bands of sympathy between the human family, besides those of the intellect:—community of interests, outward companionship, fellowship of suffering; these being more palpable, and within the reach of common minds, draw men's hearts together, and establish a feeling of brotherhood—weak it may be, and easily broken, without the strong cement of christian love, but still in-

degree existing. In this way, I could understand and feel for them; and after the vital energies of Christianity had been realized amongst them, still more attractive points of union were admitted.

Agnes soon suggested the building a large school-house; appointing properly instructed persons to conduct it, but superintending the management herself. Though never blest with children, she was, like all persons of refined and well-constituted minds, exceedingly fond of them; they were, to her, untiring subjects of contemplation: their unalloyed mirth, sunny smiles, and trustful love, she delighted in, with something of childhood's fresh enjoyment: *her* nature was as transparent as theirs; no marvel that she sympathized with them so entirely! At this period of our union, we both hoped for the only possible temporal accession to our happiness, the blessing of children.

The school under her care increased and flourished. Nor did she end her labours of love there: she visited the sick, relieved their bodily wants, and then administered to their spiritual, or, for this, called in my aid.

Thus we loved and lived through many sunny

days!—Does any one fancy that it was but dull living, but a sorry kind of existence? I tell them nay; but that it was directly the contrary. 'Tis true, we saw but little society: some of our neighbours did not choose to visit us; others, *we* did not choose to visit; there were a few congenial spirits, attracted by a similarity of tastes, occasionally came to our dwelling: but it happened that nearly every one of these lived at too great a distance for it to be possible very often to visit each other: and so I have generally found it throughout life; that those who would be suitable and delightful companions, are mostly separated from us by space or circumstance. However, when our friends did come, they were enjoyed exceedingly.

Agnes was of a social temperament; she delighted too in hospitality. Whenever we saw any friends, she would incite me to talk, as she fancied I had a talent for conversation;" and she wished others should be aware of it, as well as herself: she was anxious—I fancied—that they should understand she was not fascinated by mere pulpit declamation, or a pleasing exterior. She wished, in the overflowing of her affection, that others should adopt her

partial views of her husband. Our life was as free from *ennui* or dulness, as it was from feverish excitement—all pure and rational pleasure or recreations we enjoyed with a zest, oh! how different and superior to that of the mere hunter after pleasure—the votary of the world!

I had, beside my incomparable wife's society, and my efforts for improving others, the wide and ample field of knowledge and science stretched out before me, with no let or hinderance to my exploring it. I immediately commenced the study of the languages, and a regular course of reading: the library I found at Mount Bank was not either extensive or well chosen, except so far as it concerned the books Agnes had bought. I immediately laid in all the works recommended me by Mr. Wesley, and made many additions in ancient and modern literature.

I used to read to Agnes frequently of an evening, while she worked, or drew, making at the same time comments on the merits or demerits of the book. She proposed I should read Milton's *Paradise Lost* aloud to her, that we might enjoy the pleasure of comparing our favourite passages. Thoroughly

did she admire and enter into the spirit of this great poem, and often would she point out to me delicate shades of beauty, that I had never before paused to dwell on.

My parents had, from the time of our marriage, removed to a more commodious house, built for them by their generous daughter-in-law: my father, of course exempted from labour, now superintended the care of our domain: it gave him some light occupation, and prevented the listlessness he must have found from idleness. My dear mother, now as happily situated as she had ever asked or hoped, frequently assisted Agnes in many of her plans for the good of our poor neighbours: the latter always consulted her before she commenced any undertaking, of whatever nature; she knew and appreciated the uncommon strength of my mother's understanding and judgment.

Thus, for a time, we all kept on the "noiseless tenor of our way." There is not much interest felt in the details of quiet contentment; there is a lack of excitement experienced—of stirring events—of novel sensation. And yet in reality I complained not of any want of stimulus, while enjoying this

tranquill portion of my existence ; it was supplied partly from the energising nature of religious principle, which interests and exercises all the deep emotions of the soul, thereby preventing any rust or inactivity gathering over it—and partly from my now being in that happy season of life, when, to persons of imaginative temperament, this earth wears the hues of heaven. Youth was past—but not youth's peculiar happy moods and feelings : I still often felt keen delight, without stopping to analyze the cause of that delight; or, if I did reason about it, the spell was not thereby broken—the harmony did not cease. There was then a mystic music in all nature, that was heard and understood by my listening and entranced spirit. All life was tinged with poetry : even common and familiar things were glorified by some reflection caught from it: the sublime verities of our holy faith were beheld by me, invested with this halo ; and Agnes was often my interpreting angel—for she would sometimes embody in words, thoughts, I fancied too ethereal to be revealed. Thus was this part of my life a beautiful poem—certainly too divine to last.

As if to prevent any danger of the “ sweetest

honey" being "loathsome in its own deliciousness," the generally sweet and even intercourse that subsisted between Agnes and myself was occasionally slightly ruffled by some of those thousand little occurrences of daily life, that sometimes cast a thin *nuance* across the otherwise bright horizon; but they were as mere ripples on the calm lake—momentary stops of harmony—gentle rumplings of the rose-leaf.

We were both sensitive—I, morbidly so. I would be so unreasonable sometimes as to be annoyed, and to show the annoyance, if Agnes did not look or speak as affectionately as usual—or if she suffered my short absences from home without expressing a proper degree of regret or unhappiness. My love made me exigeant; I considered not that it was selfish, thus to vex her with what was mostly the mere coinage of my brain, but fancied, in my self-deception, that all refined and sensitive spirits must feel as I did. I used to vex her, too, occasionally, by fancying she was not as happy as she had expected to have been; and that she had not found her expectations realized in me. Had I practised this folly on some women—and even ex-

cellent women too—it might have imbibited our domestic happiness most materially—for the peace of married life is often, in the first instances, broken by such fancied ills as these, and, like trifles, often lay the foundation for a series of petty disputes and disquietudes. But Agnes was too sweet-tempered and gentle to be made irritable by my folly—she was often vexed at these suspicions, but generally attributed them to my great affection for herself; and instead of dwelling on the subject of complaint, dismissed all mention of it, as soon as it was possible for her to do so.

In about a year after our marriage, her brother came to see us. He met us, as if nothing disagreeable had happened on either side: I was obliged on this occasion to have a battle with my pride, (of which, it may have been seen, I had a great share), before I could consent to behave as if he had not cast scorn on my alliance with his sister: for her sake, too, I endeavoured to forget what had mortified me. Agnes was delighted again to renew her affectionate intercourse with her brother; and thus all seemed smoothed in our path.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath ;
And stars to set : but all—
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O death !

F. HEMANS.

THUS time passed on—years glided by, with rapid movement—no event of stirring interest happened for four years after our marriage—my love for Agnes rather increased than diminished. I found she possessed that sterling excellence, which so few, even of good persons, can lay claim to. Her naturally good disposition and tendencies were exalted and strengthened by her humble piety. I soon found her religion was much deeper than my own. I was a creature of impulse, and too many of my best and holiest emotions subsided, in great measure, after the excitement had passed ; her's seemed to belong to a congenial nature, and to meet with but little antagonist power ; or rather, perhaps, the

subduing influence of the gospel had early moulded her heart in its heavenly form. All persons do not seem, certainly, to have been born with the same amount of evil in their natures ; all, undoubtedly, need the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit, to draw their hearts permanently heavenwards ; but *all* do not evidence the same depravity or love of evil ; goodness and truth seem to command their sympathy, and be more easily adopted than a contrary course : the why, or the wherefore, of this difference, is not for us to explain ; it remains amongst the many psychological difficulties, that will perhaps be solved in a future and higher state of existence.

I was entering on the fifth year of our marriage ; the autumn was commencing ; by degrees I felt an unaccountable depression steal on me. I tried to shake it off, but could not ; every thing seemed enveloped in gloom ; nature no longer looked rejoicing ; books and study wearied me ; preaching to our little flock became exceedingly difficult and distasteful. I could scarcely pray, and found no consolations in the exercises of piety. Agnes suggested that I could not be well in health ; but I

felt no bodily ailment whatever, yet this awful, overpowering gloom seemed worse than any sort of disease. My unwearied soother did all in the power of woman to relieve and sustain me; and it was only in her society I felt any diminution of my mental malady. A dim foreboding of coming evil almost continually oppressed me. I tried to exercise faith in God's promises. I endeavoured to draw consolation from what I had already experienced of his favour and communion; but the spirit that haunted me was not thereby exorcised. I felt left to myself, a reed shaken by the wind! All things I before took such delight in, failed to interest; my looks and intellectual exercises were a weariness.

In a short time after the depression came on, it was increased by my being called to the bed-side of a dying man: his physical sufferings were extreme; death, in its most terrific form, I beheld before me: the poor fellow's mind seemed lost and swallowed up in his bodily tortures. It was in vain to speak of hope or faith, or any of the consolatory themes of religion. His previous character had not been notoriously bad; for some time past,

he had attended the Methodist preaching, but had never made any decided profession. The dreadful convulsions I saw him undergo, and the frightful contortions of his countenance in the last struggle, haunted me for months afterward.

I had never before witnessed a death anything like so awful ; indeed, I had rarely been present at the very instant of dissolution, so that it was an uncommon thing for me to see an inanimate body. After the poor man had died, his afflicted wife begged me to stay a little while with her, till some of her friends arrived ; we were perforē near the corpse, as they had but one unoccupied room ; so that I could scarcely help seeing the yet disturbed, ghastly countenance of the deceased. When I arrived at home, Agnes saw I was particularly agitated. I briefly told her where I had been, and that the poor fellow I had visited was dead, but would not shock her by the details. However, from this time, all nature seemed to me but one vast tomb ; death haunted me in every place and under every form. The living blooming flowers, I used so to love and to share with Agnes the care of tending and culturing, were now, to my imagination,

but emblems of decay and death ; instead of rejoicing in their bloom and fragrance, I antedated their quick fading and dissolution, and mourned over their inevitable doom. The very children I met in my daily path, roseate with health and life, I fancied doomed to an early death, and that underneath their bloom was concealed the canker-worm of disease. Soon, too, this idea was transferred to my almost adored wife. Strange it is, and amongst the other mysteries that environ us, that this dread presentiment should have taken such hold of my mind, only a few short months before the actual and appalling reality occurred. I shuddered when first the idea presented itself. I refused to entertain it, but still it followed me. I could think of Agnes only as a fragile dying being, who would perhaps be removed from my sight at no very distant time, and carried to the cold grave. I questioned her anxiously about her health : she gave very satisfactory answers, and wondered at my earnest tone and manner.

Seeing I was so very much depressed, and thinking change of air might be of service to me, she proposed a tour in Devonshire. I con-

sented to any thing she proposed, but did not expect much benefit from the change. However, we travelled slowly and leisurely through the rich and picturesque county of Devon, stopping for a few days at any of the celebrated places, or points of scenery, of which there are so many. Still nature had for me doffed her "wedding garment," and put on her "shroud." I found how vain are all extrinsic advantages to ensure one day's mental tranquillity. Here was I, an obscure individual, raised to a station of affluence and respectability without one painful struggle. I had a wife that I loved with an intense affection—pursuits congenial to my taste, that I could occupy myself with; and above all, had, till lately, an approving conscience, and, as I believed, the favour of God; now, all seemed nought to me. Riches and station—what could they do? could *they* minister to a mind diseased? My wife was still as valued, as ever; but the enjoyment of her society was poisoned, by the idea of her death being so often present to my mind;—and then the consolations of piety seemed gone for ever! I only looked at the gloomy side of the picture. I dwelt on God's judgments and

threatenings—on earthly sufferings and penal woe. No one can imagine or understand the depth of mental misery I was plunged in, but those unhappy persons who have experienced similar visitations.

However, I strove to exert myself before Agnes ; I only let her know in part, the real state of my mind. The effort I was obliged to make for her sake, together with her power of soothing, prevented me from altogether sinking, it may be, into a state of decided insanity, for I felt on the very brink of it ; and from henceforth I could more entirely sympathize with this species of awful suffering.

We returned from our excursion with my spirits nearly in the same state as when we set out. But gradually, in a few weeks after, the gloom wore away. I could once more enjoy existence. The change was slow ; it was like the leisurely advance of dawn before daylight. This was in the spring, and that year it came in its primeval glory ; but few cold, withering days mingled with its geniality. Again I walked abroad with my beloved Agnes rejoicingly ; hope and gladness once more visited my benighted spirit. I gave myself up to the delightful change.

Agnes was truly happy, and devoutly thankful : never did she appear so dear, so precious to me ; again I could hope she might be spared to me for many years, and that when she did go hence, I should shortly follow : but, in general, the dark ideas of the tomb were banished altogether ; or if they came, it was invested with the glory of the resurrection.

One day Agnes had taken rather an unusually long walk, to see one of her poor pensioners ; I was that morning engaged in the library writing some letters, but promised to set out to meet her on her return. I did so, and when we met, observed she looked flushed and fatigued : she said she had rather over-calculated her strength, as she had found the distance more considerable than she had anticipated. We reached home slowly, and when I arrived there, I found she was very unwell : I instantly became alarmed, and sent for a doctor ; he treated the complaint at first very lightly, but the next day looked more grave, and said there were some symptoms of fever. Immediately I took the alarm ; my late presentiment occurred to me, and my heart sunk within me. I galloped off to

Truro, for the best physician in the town. I was afraid no speed would equal mine ; and I knew the importance of the early treatment of the disease. In the few hours I had been away, she had become worse ; and when I presented myself by the bedside of my idolized wife, she did not know me : delirium had come on. I almost raved, myself.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ Wh^t, a faith and love, which parted from thee never,
Had ripened thy just soul to dwell with God,
Meekly thou didst resign this earthly load
Of death, called life, which us from life doth sever !”

— MILTON.

EVERY possible means were tried to abate the violence of the disorder, but with little success; my mother and myself watched by the bedside unceasingly. I seemed threatened with too great a weight of calamity to be able to contemplate. While there was any thing to be done, it relieved me. I applied leeches to her dear temples myself; and did every thing that it was possible to do.—She sank at length (after a restless wandering night) into a doze; we watched her with breathless interest. When she awoke, my eyes were gladdened by per-

ceiving she knew me, and that her recollection had returned. "My dearest husband," she said, "I must say what I have to say, while there is time, for I feel that it will be short." "Stop Agnes!" said I, "do not break my heart by so saying; you *will* recover, you *must* recover, I cannot bear to part with you; I have stormed heaven by my prayers for your precious life—*believe* that you will yet live to bless me; and it shall be so! "If you really love me, John," said she solemnly, talk not so wildly, so impiously, recollect your high calling, your christian principles;" now is the time for their exercise, now is the time to test their reality. Our good and gracious Father has vouchsafed us several years of almost unalloyed happiness together; murmur not, nor wonder that he sees fit now to interrupt it!"

I listened in silence to her sweet and solemn words; and while she proceeded, some faint gleam of the celestial spirit that animated her, shed its influence on my chastened heart.

"We ought *not* to have expected," she proceeded, "that this earth would have long continued so much like heaven: let us bow in deep thankfulness for

such a large share of past blessings ; and, O John, I charge you to pray for grace and submission to bear the stroke, I feel is about to be inflicted on you. Then think, oh ! think of the unspeakable mercy, of my not having a God to *seek* ! for has *He* not long been my ‘shield and exceeding great reward !’ Has not my soul fled for refuge to that hope set before me in the gospel ?’ and have I not felt the peace that has proceeded from faith in the great atonement ?—Verily *now* is the time to know the unspeakable value of these truths. My soul feels a sacred peace, a divine trust, an humble assurance of the Divine favour ; I am even willing to leave you, my dear, my very dear husband ! and only think of the grace vouchsafed, which enables me to feel this willingness to leave, though but for a time, my heart’s cherished friend, my dearer self !”

She ceased speaking, and seemed engaged in mental prayer ; a beautiful serenity overspread her expressive features. I tried likewise to pray as she had desired me, for strength to bear what I felt was inevitable ; for I knew it would be useless to supplicate for her life : her spirit seemed so ripe for

heaven, that I felt an inward conviction it would thitherward soon take its flight.

Very soon the fever raged with greater violence than ever, and her senses relapsed into delirium ; but even then, when reason could no longer hold the helm of thought, it was beautiful to remark what a pure and peaceful element her mind must have lived in ; how far distant from earth's grovelling cares or desires, judging from the random images and associations that now crowded upon it, and to which she gave vent in words. Her hallucinations were chiefly of heavenly things, or of those things on earth most like heaven ; she spoke of seeing angels in white raiment, with starry crowns and amaranthine flowers ; of being in a king's palace, where everything was most glorious and dazzling ; where she saw beautiful children, and all sorts of fair creatures and lovely things. But of a sudden I was struck with a painful change in her countenance, as she continued gazing upward.

"What is it that distresses my own Agnes ?" I asked. "Oh !" said she, "doctor," for she fancied in her delirium I was the physician, "I see a fearful sight—I see a huge ugly giant going to fight with

my dear husband—he is preparing for battle; surely, surely he will kill him, and I shall see him no more ! Look, look," continued she, " he gnashes his teeth with rage and fury, and seems determined to slay the beloved of my heart. I must beg my good angel to fly to his rescue; for, doctor, his huge enemy is too strong for *you* to be able to assist him."

With this she gave a piercing scream that went to my very heart. We altered her position in bed, and the physician, who was now present, administered an opiate ; it quickly took effect, and she slept for awhile. I had listened to the latter part of her ravings with intense emotion : " It may be," said I to myself, " a fore-shadowing of coming evil, after her pure spirit has ceased to be my companion; and, in a sort, my guardian from ill, in this lower world. But what matter what becomes of me, when she is taken from me ? I could hardly be more wretched ! "

Thus impiously did I reason. I have since felt wretchedness so deep, that what I then suffered would have been comparative bliss. But this was my first heavy calamity ; and coming as it did, when

it was so little expected, or prepared for, my spirit seemed crushed by its weight. But there was no self-reproach mingled with its bitterness; and it is this ingredient in the cup of suffering, that gives it its intolerable character.

The fourth day dawned on me, still watching by her bedside; no entreaties could remove me for one moment thence.

She had passed a very unquiet night — her strength appeared now nearly exhausted—the fever seemed to have preyed on all her vital energies—she rarely spoke, and continued dozing. I saw death approaching rapidly. However, she once more rallied after a short sleep. Calling me nearer to her, she once more greeted me by name.

“Dearest John,” she said, “it will soon all be over; the fire that consumes me will be soon spent. It is, I feel it is, a very awful thing to die! unspeakably more so than sometimes in our hours of health we think of. What but a vital evidence of our holy faith, what but a simple trust in redeeming mercy, could give any creature confidence and peace at such a season? I have that assurance—I enjoy that peace! rejoice, and be deeply thankful

that it is so. Remember, I have *tested* the promises of the gospel, and have found them able to support me in this solemn hour. Let this be a strengthener of your faith—an encouragement in your onward career."

She paused for a little time, and then said, "I have a dim remembrance of some troubled dream I had about you, Dearest." I forgot the particulars, only that I thought you in some great danger from a powerful enemy, and that I prayed for heavenly aid in your behalf. I remember the suit was backed by some unseen powerful pleader, and that, in the end, after you had received a number of severe hurts, which my heart bled to witness, you were finally rescued from the power of your enemy; and we afterward rejoiced together! I dare say this unpleasing dream arose from my troubled sleep—but nevertheless I could not help telling you of it."

I mused in silence over what she said—her words sank deep into my heart. I could not help thinking them prophetic. She slept again. Nature seemed gradually sinking. The doctor said the collapsed stage of the disorder had come on, and he feared she had not strength enough to rally again. I sat

drinking in her every gasp—she opened her eyes—sweetly smiled upon me, and distinctly said, “Adieu, love, till we meet above!” and with a deep sigh her redeemed spirit ascended to the paradise of God.

I kneeled down by her bed, with my mother, and prayed audibly and fervently; it seemed as if my lips were unlocked, and that I could now pour out my heart to that Being, who only knew how fervently I had loved, and how deeply I deplored the departed saint. *

CHAPTER XV.

“ An uncomplaining apathy displaced
This anguish ; and indifferent to delight,
To aim, or purpose, he consumed his days :
To private interest dead, and public care.”

WORDSWORTH.

My former state of gloom came on again with a deeper hue of blackness, soon after the decease of my angel-wife. For a time, indeed, I seemed wonderfully supported. I bore the funeral, and the condolences of our friends, with something like fortitude. I found some consolation too from the remembrance of my Agnes’ happy death: I felt thankful that she had none of those appalling struggles, those wrenchings of the flesh and spirit, that sometimes take place in the hours of dissolution. Her soul, “ meet for the inheritance of the saints in light,” had been summoned thither in as

gentle a manner, and after as little amount of suffering, as it was possible to expect; few of the children of Adam put off their outward tabernacle so easily.

And then her blessed state of mind occurred, with a soothing power, to my first thoughts about her. The bridegroom came at an hour when she expected Him not, and at a time when she was not aware; but she was found with her lamp trimmed, and her light burning ; and the voice of her Lord sounded sweetly in her ear : though her earthly delights were of no common kind—of no debasing character, yet she left them all without a murmur, and went forth rejoicingly to meet Him ! Oh ! who that had seen her die, had not said, “let me die the death of the righteous.”

All this I recalled to mind, and for a time it comforted me; but, it may have been partly from the deranged state of my health, as well as the overpowering nature of my calamity, I soon was again environed with the deepest gloom and prostration of spirit. The world, and this state of being altogether, appeared to me one vast cold desert, where there was no comfort and no hope. I found it again difficult to pray. I tried to draw near to

God, even the “God of all consolation”—but the “heavens seemed iron” to my prayer. I fancied it rebounded back on me again. My serious friends came with counsel and advice. I turned from them in silent hopelessness, and said within myself “Lover and friend hast thou put away from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.”

Agnes had made a will, I found, sometime previous to her illness, in which she had, with the exception of a legacy to her brother, left me the whole of the property that was in her power, without the slightest restriction or restraint. She had remarked in it, she wished I would continue to pay all her pensioners the weekly or quarterly sums she had allowed them, and that she knew I should have pleasure in so doing. Thus had she given me another proof of her devoted love !

I felt unable to continue my accustomed exhortations and public services. I wrote to Mr. Wesley to this effect. The answer I received to the letter was somewhat less kind and sympathetic than I had expected. He knew not, as I did, the extent of my loss. He concluded—and as I now think, perhaps, with justice—that my spiritual life had

declined ; that I had in some way or other neglected its duties, or forsaken its spirit ; or, he asked, how should I have been given up to such unchristian grief and depression ? He exhorted me finally, to continue my accustomed labours. that in so doing I should at length find peace and resignation.

' I put by that letter—and it was the first of his, that I felt any thing but pleasure from—with something of displaceancy : "he does not understand my case," thought I ; "he cannot enter into its peculiarities. I begin to think, however excellent Mr. Wesley may be as an awakener of men's consciences, as an instructor in religion, he is not the sort of man, one would choose as a sympathizing friend ; perhaps the very exaltation of his character and office, in a degree unfits him for it." Thus I reasoned, but very erroneously. I have discovered since, there was a well of tenderness in his heart, that was deep, if not always apparent ; he sometimes thought it necessary to adopt the stern tones of a reprobate, where he believed severity would be a kindness : but he delighted not in it ; it did not seem, as in the case of John Knox, a part and parcel of his nature.

However, the effect of this letter on my mind was a slight degree of estrangement : I did not reply to it.

My time hung heavy on my hands. I could do nothing but walk restlessly about. How I envied those persons who could shut themselves up in their houses, and there stay till the withering grief was past. It seemed impossible to me to remain quietly in one place ;—move I must, or my brain would whirl with the pressure of thought. I would set off from home, and wander miles round the country, without aim or object, except the vain one of getting away from myself. My dear mother tried all her powers of soothing. I felt grateful, and tried to cheer up a little in her presence. She pressed upon my consideration the blessed state of my sainted wife, and the possibility of receiving comfort from communing with her spirit. Thus she, who so well understood me, appealed to my imagination, in order if possible to rouse it into consolatory exercise. If I had had the *control* of my mind at that period, I have no doubt she would not have thus urged these ideas in vain—but I had not. I believe, indeed, self-command was for a season out of my power. I was like a

shattered bark in an angry sea, without compass or rudder.

Thus a year passed on sadly enough; but time, the great restorer, had insensibly in a degree healed the first smart of the wound; yet my apathy, and want of interest in what used to delight me, continued. It happened at this time there was some business to be transacted in London, about some of the property, that required my presence. My mother urged me to go myself, instead of delegating any other person to conduct the affair. I had never been in the Great Metropolis during Agnes' life-time, as she had no wish to go there; and as the distance was so great, and travelling so slow, I never had felt any desire of seeing it, strong enough to take me. Now, I suddenly caught at the idea with somewhat of alacrity. I fancied I might, in some measure, leave my gloom behind. I had begun to feel a distaste to Cornwall, and our beautiful Mount Bank. The spirit of beauty had departed from it, since the inspiring presence of my "Agnes had fled! "I will go forth, and see somewhat of the world," thought I, "as yet I only know it from books, and the experience of others."

I was quite a young man still, just twenty-nine; much older, indeed in sentiment, and the amount of emotion that had shaken me, but still inexperienced in all of practical ~~working~~ life. The seclusion I had lived in with Agnes—the safe and happy and useful seclusion—had tended to foster all my meditative habits; but had wholly prevented me from any collision with the great mass of mankind. I had learned from her, that what is called the great world, was a state of society very different from what I should have regarded either as desirable, or even interesting. She spoke strongly of its glare, and glitter, and hollowness, and emptiness; she would often quote Quarles, as embodying, in some of his verses, her ideas of the world. “ ‘Tis empty, haik! it sounds!” was one of her favourite emblems. This view of general society in polished life, I had adopted on her dicta; I thought it agreed with my convictions of the obliquity of human nature, and this idea confirmed me in its truth.

After making some necessary arrangements, and installing my parents in my house, I set forth on my first visit to London. The journey was made slowly, as I stopped to see all the considerable

towns in the way. I went to the house of a solicitor of eminence, who had for some years transacted all my late wife's business; he had begged I would consider his house my home while I staid in town.

Agnes had some relatives in London, who moved in fashionable society; a few of these had written me friendly letters of condolence after her decease, and expressed a wish that I would call on them whenever I went to London. I debated within myself, whether I would take advantage of this invitation or not. They were, in general, persons Agnes had no love for, beyond the common ties of kindred and kindly feeling; she had associated with them during Mr. Alison's life, and had received their kindness and attention gratefully.

I feared that in making their acquaintance, I should be perhaps subjected to their sneers at my want of manner, or knowledge of fashionable etiquette. I felt I lacked a certain ease and freedom from constraint in my intercourse with strangers, that would at once betray my plain and humble breeding. These thoughts glanced through my mind, when I remembered Agnes' relations, and their claims on me. And yet I thought, "What

matter is it how they regard me? what have I to do with the world, or the world's ways?" I will, however, call on her connexions, whatever my reception may be.

Mr. Usburn, the gentleman I have named—and at whose house for a few days I took up my abode, intending as soon as possible to seek for suitable lodgings—was a man of the first-rate character and respectability in his profession. He early introduced me to his two sons; one, apparently the eldest, a steady plodding man of business, who seemed his father's chief help, being a partner in the firm; the other, a young barrister, with whose appearance and manners I was much struck at our first interview: he looked about my own age; his person was handsome—his manners irresistible—he appeared sensible, well-bred and frank: he affected neither fashion nor exclusiveness; and yet there were few one could meet with, even in London, who would have supported these pretensions with greater credit and éclat; but the air of refinement about his deportment and manners seemed to proceed rather from nature, than art or training: and possessed for me, who was conscious of being so defec-

tive in such matters, a great and immediate charm. He had, as I concluded, heard my previous history from his father; but, nothing daunted by knowing I had been a Methodist preacher—in those days considered a singular enough character—and seeing my evident depression of spirits, he exerted himself, as it appeared to me, in the most disinterested and benevolent manner, to arouse my attention, and excite my interest. He told me, that now having much leisure, he should feel great pleasure in being my cicerone about London, and showing me every thing worthy of being seen; and begged, in his father's name, I would not think of leaving their house, as my company would afford them all pleasure. I felt truly grateful for these manifestations of Mr. Alfred Usburn's kindness and attention, and exerted myself to appear pleased and interested.

He soon took me the round of all the usual sights of London, some of which interested me exceedingly; and he knew so much of science and natural history, and applied his knowledge so appropriately and unobtrusively, that I felt it was no common treat to have the society of such a companion.

My spirits speedily revived; the sort of excite-

ment I now had, seemed to agree with both mind and body. Hope, arousing from her lethargy, once again shook and plumed her radiant wings, and prepared to soar, though *not* this time, certainly, into the highest region of religious peace ; nearer earth she hovered, and soon decked earth's vanities with something of heaven's own hues !

Not that I forgot, or desired to forget, my buried love ; I still fondly cherished her memory in my heart's holiest shrine. But the intense bitterness of grief was past ! and, beside, the pleasures of society and intellectual intercourse had begun to assume a value in my eyes, that they never had before.

My new friend cautiously hinted at the confined views, and somewhat illiberal notions, many or most of the religious persons of the day possessed, and regretted it should be so. He, at the same time, in the most flattering way insinuated his opinion of my superior understanding and talents ; and said the only thing required to develope them fully, was a greater intercourse with society and a more enlarged style of thinking. I readily listened to his hints, and thought I would avail myself of his suggestions.

It suited well my natural vanity, and love of applause, to be considered an eminently endowed person, and one who could rise above the narrow views of party or of prejudice. I had, too, begun to fancy there were indeed many things tolerated by the good men with whom I had hitherto associated, that were revolting to good taste, if not to right feeling; I was glad to catch at what, perhaps, may have been fairly condemned in their proceedings, as an excuse to my conscience, for absenting myself from their meetings and frequent intercourse.

Neither Mr. Wesley nor his brother were in London at this time, so that there was no one in the connexion that had any particular claims on my attention. I gladly availed myself of the former's advice, to attend the church services, and generally went accompanied by Alfred Usburn, who was seldom long together absent from me, he seemed to have a reverence for religion, and to attend to its outward observances; but at first he rather evaded any particular conversation on the subject; afterward I discovered he doubted some of the most important doctrines of evangelical faith, though, for a time, and until he had completely established

his empire over me, I never suspected it was so. His temperament and mine were exceedingly different. He was a man of calm reflection, never giving himself up to impulse or excitement. His reason seemed to hold the complete control of his passions; and though he was by no means cold or apathetic, yet he often acted as if he were both. He was a stern logician, and would bring every species of truth to the bar of argument, and, as it were, experiment.

As I had never met with just such a character before, and as his conversation and style of reasoning excited my intellect and flattered its pride, I suffered myself to be carried away by its speciousness, and was, in the end, harassed and mystified often, by its results. I now think that his mode of treating many subjects was unphilosophical and shallow, and might have been often refuted by a more practised and far-seeing antagonist than I then was. However, the immediate effect on my mind was the unsettling some of the most important principles of my religious faith; or rather the admitting, though against my will, some degree of doubt on these subjects. I was at first uneasy,

and troubled at the dimness that came across my spirit, when the doubting tempter first assaulted me. I repelled all arguments—which were very insidiously introduced—with warmth, and perhaps some temper. I was answered amiably and candidly, and with an apparent desire of seeking merely for truth, and discarding prejudice on either side. This amiable liberality lulled my fears asleep, and I again ventured my utterly untried and untempered weapons against my opponent's polished armour. The result was generally defeat, but managed with such consummate skill and address that I was rarely suffered to feel any mortification.

I am persuaded, that if Alfred Usburn could have foreseen what results would have followed his unsettling my religious principles, and introducing a spirit of scepticism and false reasoning into my mind, he would never have attempted it—he would have let me go on in what he considered my delusion, knowing it was a safe, if not a happy one ; for he did not want benevolence of heart. His besetting sin was a pride of intellect, a love of mental power: he thought I was a convert worth gaining ; for he saw I had more mind than many of those

he met with; he thought it a pity, therefore, I should be tied down by, what he termed, narrow prejudices, priestly dogmas. Not that he entirely rejected revelation: he wished to retain the bible, but to bend it to his views and purposes. Men must, according to his ideas, be influenced by it in a degree—there could be no other substitute—but then its doctrines must be explained conformably to *reason*; there must be no mysteries in it; nothing but what could be explained and understood by the intellect.

CHAPTER XVI.

"I know the ways of pleasure, the sweet strains,
The lullings and the relishings of it;
The propositions of hot blood and brains;
What mirth and music mean—what love and wit."

G. HERBERT.

WHILE this mental process of freeing me from prejudice was going on, my friend and guide undertook to enlarge my ideas in another way, by introducing me into society. Now, the set or circle in which he moved as a "bright particular star," was one of the few, that it would not be a weariness to revolve round. The persons that composed it were most of them noted for some attribute of mind, or possession of talent. Intellectual society had at that period received an impetus from the popularity of Dr. Johnson and his particular coterie: many gifted women, too, graced the drawing-rooms, and gave a magic finish to the pleasures of social intercourse. Into such circles my friend led me; there was nothing in them to alarm the current of my feel-

ings, after leading such a quiet and serious life as I had done. Books and music were the only sources of amusement; he never went to balls, and cards he detested.

Here was food both for the taste and intellect: I was incited to talk, after my first awkwardness was subdued; and I heard murmurs of applause, I saw looks of approbation from eyes radiant with beauty and mind. I did not calculate that my reputed good fortune, and my being a young widower—all the drawbacks being withheld by my introducer—were powerful auxiliaries in my favour.

My vanity was gratified; I began to be on good terms with myself as to outward advantages; and I soon acquired an ease that might have astonished those who had formerly known my diffidence. “Surely,” thought I to myself, “my beloved Agnes must have fallen amongst very different persons from those I have had the advantage of meeting,” or she would not have spoken of London society as she used to do; she must have gone to merely vapid balls, or duller card-parties, and did not meet with the delightful society there is to be found in this focus of intellect.

My friend was pleased with what he termed my success, and rallied me on it; "Give me credit," said he, "for my disinterestedness in leading a rival, such as you are likely to be, into my chosen circles; nay, you have eclipsed me already, for the ladies all say, you look and speak so like a poet, that they are sure you are one; and poets, you know, are ever pets with the fair sex. There was Lady Elizabeth Danvers, who doats on sentiment, begging me to get one of your sonnets for her. Cannot you oblige her, and manufacture one for the occasion, addressed to her eyelashes?" "They are, indeed, almost long and silken enough to inspire me," said I, "but for the present I delegate the honour to yourself."

However, the hint was taken. This same lady had lent me a copy of Goldsmith's poems, which were then recently published, and with the fame of which the literary world was ringing. I had always had an inclination to scribble in verse, or poetry, as I sometimes fancied it: the temptation was great, therefore, before I returned the book, to attempt a poetical critique in one of the blank pages, and adroitly insinuate some complimentary sentiments in conclusion, to the fair owner who had

expressed her conviction of my poetical talents. I did so, and out of sheer vanity said, or insinuated, much more than I felt for the lady in question; though meaning only to convey a general sort of admiration; for, notwithstanding she was an acknowledged beauty, and an accomplished blue, she had not in the slightest degree interested me, beyond the mere feeling of gratified vanity at her implied favourable sentiments.

My heart, though sufficiently weak and susceptible, was not yet so faithless to its first love, as to suffer any other woman's image to usurp her place, or put aside her hallowed remembrance.

'Tis true, my self-esteem was gratified, my mental capabilities roused, by the flattering notice of the fair dames who graced these distinguished soirées; but beyond this, I thought not. When I looked around on their brilliance, I sighed, and confessed there was not one in all these select assemblages that could compare to my Agnes !

Unfortunately, the Lady Elizabeth attached more meaning to my foolish jeu d'esprit than I had intended, or wished; at least, so I judged, from the deep blush that suffused her cheek, and the con-

scious air that marked her deportment, the next time we met. Like a weak coxcomb, I was flattered, though half frightened by these manifestations of sensibility. However, I talked sentiment that evening with more piquancy than before, but endeavouring at the same time to keep on neutral ground. It was responded to with an air of sufficient tenderness and empressment. I saw at once my fair companion's great aptness to fall in love, and was absurd and unworthy enough to trifle with her weakness.

Alfred Usburn watched our proceedings with an amused eye ; he fancied I was beginning to succumb under the fair aristocrat's attractions. Much did he rally me the next morning on what he termed my brilliant conquest.

I affected only to consider it a jest, and that the lady was but amusing herself with my untaught admiration : but, in reply, he put aside his levity, and seriously advised me to desist in my attentions, unless I meant really to endeavour gaining the hand of the daughter of one of England's proudest peers ; "for," said he, "ready as she is to bestow her heart on any interesting aspirant, her father would

think her and himself degraded by any alliance short of old nobility."

My pulse quickened, the colour mounted to my cheeks, as I heard this intelligible allusion to my own humble blood. "Thank you," said I, "in a piqued tone, for your warning, but it is needless. I never contemplated aspiring to the honour of the Lady Elizabeth's alliance; my plebeian predilections are perhaps quite as strong as his aristocratic prejudices, and I should be slow to accept, as well as to aspire, to such distinction. My friend replied not to my petulance; he thought it best, perhaps, that my pride should be somewhat wounded for my folly.

From that time forth I shunned the lady who had been the innocent cause of my pique. "Doubtless," thought I, "she will soon find some other —what Usburn sarcastically styled—interesting aspirant, on whom to bestow her easily won heart: I will let them see, I aim at no such honour."

I felt, for some days after this conversation, irritable and ennuyé. In this interval, Alfred Usburn pressed upon me my half promise of accompanying him to the theatre, to see the great Garrick

act. We had several conversations, previously, on this subject; he—trying to do away with what he called my narrow prejudices respecting the propriety of a Christian's frequenting a playhouse; I urging, though more and more faintly, my reasons for dissenting from him. He maintained the usual class of arguments generally employed in behalf of theatrical amusements—such as, their intellectual character; the encouragements they hold out to the efforts of genius; their capability of being turned into vehicles of reproof to vice, and incentives to virtue; beside the benefits conferred by having such rational public recreations for the people. Every section of these arguments he dwelt on with great ability, till I was nearly silenced by his rhetoric.

But I asked in reply, what good moral results had ever been known, or heard of, from attending a theatre? In any known record, was there ever an instance of an individual being improved, even in outward decorum or courtesy of manners, thereby? But, on the contrary, were there not instances where bad tendencies were at least strengthened, and bad morals made worse? And though it could not be

denied that there was a world of high wisdom and intellect in the dramas of the immortal bard of Avon, was there not likewise many exhibitions on the stage, beneath the rationality of a thinking being? were there not often heard coarse jests, despicable burlesque, low buffoonery? not to mention things still more offensive to delicacy and good taste? and how did this tend to exalt pure reason, or man's diviner part? Beside, even if all these arguments should be deemed futile, or of little weight, yet there was an obvious antagonism felt to exist between theatrical amusements, *as at present conducted*, and a devotional spirit—a life of serious piety.

To this last remark my opponent replied, "I do not pretend to be a judge of what *is* antagonism to the species of piety you speak of, its being of too transcendental a kind for me entirely to comprehend; I have always considered the best service we can render the benevolent Author of our being is a reasonable one, and one which would never be endangered by an indulgence in any of the recreations or pleasures of the intellect; for to such an order, notwithstanding some abuses and imperfec-

tions, I must ever consider that theatrical amusements belong."

I was not thoroughly convinced by these specious sentiments, though in a degree influenced by them. I began to think it would be as well to see the actual working of the thing; to know by demonstration, if there were really as much moral pollution attached to it, as I had heard some good men, in the warmth of their zeal, declare there was; and to ascertain by experience, if the fascination was as great as others of a different class affirmed of it.

I therefore determined to accompany Alfred Usburn to see Garrick act Hamlet. We went accordingly. I was prepared for the imposing air of the place, its glare and glitter, but not for the amazing display of power in the great actor. He compelled attention—the most breathless—he converted imitation into reality by the earnestness of his own mind—he appeared at the time actually transformed into the character he represented—he seemed a living, breathing, intensely real Hamlet—the peculiarly sensitive, meditative, sorrow-stricken prince, you saw there evidently before you—you sympathized with his high devotion to his father's

memory, and his evident reluctance to inflict summary vengeance on his murderers—the illusion was perfect—you forgot your own existence, while absorbed in the events of his.

My friend watched my countenance, as he told me afterward, and saw how I was interested. “I knew it would be so,” said he, “how could any mortal resist such genius?” “I fully accord all the merit you claim for this incomparable actor’s powers,” replied I; “it is indeed wonderful how any man can so put his own mind into such perfect sympathy with another’s, as to produce results so like nature, that one is for the time deluded into the idea that it is such: but notwithstanding the high mental treat I own I have had, the stubborn question still forces itself back, *Cui bono?*”

Alfred Usburn looked somewhat contemptuously at me, and deigned no reply; something else occurred at the moment, or perhaps the conversation would not thus have ended. However, the Rubicon was passed. I went to the play whenever Garrick acted, for the rest of the season. I did not feel quite comfortable or satisfied in so doing; I could not get over the idea that it was a wrong thing for

me to do, whatever it might be to others. But my mind was now in a very different state to what it had been a few months previously. My private devotions were in great degree neglected : harassing doubts on many important points had been insinuated into my mind. I could not bear to be long alone ; I felt ill at ease, and dissatisfied with myself. My return home had been postponed from week to week ; my dear mother had written me frequent, affectionate letters : at length a long interval elapsed between the last, and I began to feel rather uneasy at the silence.

The society had been so agreeable into which my friend had taken ~~me~~, that I put off likewise for a long while calling on Agnes' relatives. At length I went to the house of one who had been most cordial in his invitation. I found the gentleman a vulgar purse-proud man, who evidently only showed me civility because he knew his cousin had left me the greater part of her money. He invited me to dine with him, and I went with reluctance. There I saw another phasis of London society : they were rich, and, what is called, of the first respectability ; but they had nearly all the vulgarity that distin-

guishes really under-bred persons, with much of the arrogance and finery that marks a class somewhat above them, in this country of innumerable castes and petty distinctions; all aimed at connexion with rank; all seemed desirous of establishing their claims to notice, on the merits of others in a higher grade than themselves; all seemed to exhibit the weakness of little minds—a desire to appear ~~more~~ grander and greater than they really were.

And yet these persons possessed actually enough of wealth, enough of station, to satisfy any reasonable or reasoning mind; why should they then lower themselves thus despicably, by futile attempts at further aggrandisement?—So thought I to myself, as I walked home from this tiresome visit. I wondered not that my beloved Agnes had felt out of her element, in such society as the party I had left. She was a being of a different class and mould altogether, and had scarcely a feeling in common with them.

CHAPTER XVII.

" Even in her flight to that far sphere,
Mid all her spirit's new-felt glow,
A pitying look she turned below,
On him who stood in darkness here :
Him, whom, perhaps, if vain regret
Can dwell in heaven, she pities yet.
And oft, when looking to this dim
And distant world, remembers him." MOORE.

SOON after this, I received a letter from Cornwall, stating that my mother was very unwell, and, if I could conveniently leave London, to hasten my departure, as she wished much to see me. I instantly obeyed the summons, and prepared to hasten home. There was a vague dread on my mind, that my beloved mother was near death, and that, perhaps, I should not arrive in time to see her alive; I therefore travelled post, and only arrived in time to receive my incomparable parent's farewell and blessing, and to see her spirit's calm and happy departure.

Her end was perfect peace. She had for some time past been growing in heavenly-mindedness; I found this out chiefly from her journal, which she had regularly kept for some years.

Thus another wrench was made from my earthly treasures. My mother, my beloved mother, was no more!

A sullen, apathetic mood came over me, soon after this my second great affliction. My heart seemed rather hardened than softened by it, so was I "smitten, yet received no correction;" I humbled not myself in the sight of God, on account of my departing from him in spirit, and questioning his ways: "I went on frowardly in the way of my heart."

The first day I found my mother's journal, some time after her decease, I was somewhat melted by the perusal. I give, here, a few extracts from it. I have preserved it carefully, and it still remains among the few relics of my earlier and better days.

"Sunday Evening, 17—Feeling too weak and poorly to go out to pray. Have read and prayed at home, therefore. My soul has been refreshed and rejoiced by the views and meditations I have had of the blessedness of heaven,

and of the employments that most probably occupy the powers of disembodied spirits there. May we not suppose they consist chiefly in studying the character of God—in being instructed in many of the mysteries that now puzzle, or, if dwelt on in any spirit but that of a little child, distract us in a maze of vain questionings?

"Shall we not there, too, delight in fathoming the mysteries of redemption? in understanding the 'heights and depths of the love of God,' which *now*, the apostle affirms, surpass knowledge? On these high themes, the rectified intellect will delight to dwell—it will have boundless scope for its capabilities, which, we may well conclude, will increase in power and expansion continually. 'On these thoughts my mind has dwelt with satisfaction. Oh! may my spirit be prepared and made meet for this glorious inheritance!'

"Thursday—Had an affectionate letter from my dear son! Who can tell the sweet pleasure, the burst of thankfulness, that I feel whenever I hear from, or think of him! God, 'who is rich in mercy to all that call upon him,' has verily showed himself so to me in his behalf. My prayers have been answered, and more than answered, respecting this cherished object of my heart's love. He is all that I asked, or prayed for. Riches and honour have been accorded him, but more, much more than these—the favour of our good and gracious God! "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his mercies?" my heart overflows with grateful adoration—with speechless praise.

" Monday—For some time past I feel my outward tabernacle tottering; but I think I may say the "inward man is being renewed day by day." One subject of slight anxiety oppresses me. My son does not write so frequently as he used to do; beside, his long stay in London I do not quite like. He says the law affair takes up more time than he had expected, and he wishes now to see the end of it. Then ~~why~~ am I uneasy? he wanted change of air and scene; his spirits and health were both suffering—'twas I who urged him to go. It must be my weak nerves, and my great affection for him, that cause this oppression—if he knew how unwell I am, he would surely be here; but I will not be selfish enough to make him uneasy. Father of mercies! bless and keep my dearly-loved son!

" Friday—Had felt for some days great anxiety respecting John. To-day, it seems removed—though my illness evidently increases. My dear husband now urges me to send him word how ill I am; but not quite yet—in another week, if he does not return, he shall be sent for; perhaps I may get better. Have been reading a book my son lent me, which he said he thought I should like, "Extracts from the confessions and soliloquies of St. Augustine;" I have indeed been struck and edified by much that it contains. What vivid impressions of, what close communion with God, did he not possess! what a sense of sin, what evangelical hopes of pardon—what a putting off of earth—what a clothing of heaven was vouch-

said him! I want more of this spirit, of thisunction from above! I feel, and record it thankfully, less of the physical dread of death than I used to have; all my life have I suffered from this terror; whenever I used to think of the certainty of dissolution, my flesh as it were clung with greater tenacity to my spirit, and the disunion between them appeared horrible; but for some time past, the cords seem loosening—the links of the spirit's chain seem unfastening gradually, gently. I apprehend now no terrific wrench, or struggle. This I must and will regard as an answer to my prayers on this account; for, saith our Lord, "Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, *that* will he give you."

This was the last remark my beloved mother made in her journal. When my eye glanced over the yearnings of her strong affection for me, when I saw how high an opinion she had of her son, who was conscious he was now somewhat changed since he had left her companionship, my heart melted within me, and I wept like a child. I prayed—passionately prayed, that I might at last be with her, where she now was. But my good impressions were not followed out. I did not feel inclined to return to my accustomed duties, or mode of life. As to public teaching, I found myself utterly averse from, and

unfit for it. The simple, and, perhaps, somewhat injudicious modes of speech of our poor and pious neighbours, now sounded harsh and grating to my ears when they talked to me, as they were wont, on religious subjects. They soon perceived an alteration in my manners; they saw I was become reserved and distant, and, as they expressed it, more like a fine gentleman, than before I went away. Partly they attributed this change to my severe afflictions, in losing two such friends as my wife and mother, partly to the real cause, a change of feeling and opinion. Then one or two of the most zealous and prominent characters among them thought it their duty, after a little while, to speak to me in a tone of rebuke and spiritual superiority. This I could not bear—I soon silenced them by my brief and caustic answers.

If, indeed, any one I had reverenced, such as Mr. Wesley, or a regular and pious clergyman, had encouraged me to lay open the state of my mind, and had given me judicious and suitable advice, it might have been of service; but no such persons were then near me. The individual who had succeeded Mr. R.—now a regular travelling preacher—was a coarse

illiterate man, for whom I felt a portion of my old spirit of contempt. I kept out of his way as much as possible ; not wishing entirely to break all connexion with the Methodists of the place, which I feared would be the case, should I be subjected to his rude attacks.

Things went on for some months in this uncomfortable state. I was heartily tired of Cornwall, and everything connected with it, except my father. He, poor man, seemed quietly sinking, since the decease of his beloved wife. He never was a man of many words : now he seldom spoke. I tried all in my power to rouse and interest him ; — he would receive my attentions with a pleased look, but would soon relapse into his former quietude. He often told me, when he feared I was uneasy about him, that he was not unhappy ; but that he liked much to be alone, and to think of his blessed wife, and pray that he might at length rejoin her in heaven.

I found, therefore, it was better to leave him alone, and let him take his own way ; his mind seemed in a very desirable state, and I almost envied him.

Just when I felt so unsettled, I received a letter from Alfred Usburn, saying he was going to Ireland on some business, and he wished I would accompany him, as he thought such a thorough change would be of service to me. Now, I had long felt a wish to visit Ireland. I had occasionally met with a few of its natives, and there was something about them that I much liked. Their open-heartedness and warmth of temperament, with the degree of *abandon* in most of their characters, interested me extremely. I wished to see more specimens of the Irish nation, and to have better opportunities of studying their national character; I determined therefore to accept my friend's offer, and accompany him across the channel.

CHAPTER XVIII.

" Thus was I reconverted to the world ;

Society became my glittering bride,

And airy hopes my children." — WORDSWORTH.

We sailed for Ireland with a propitious wind, and in the third morning anchored in the bay of Dublin. We went to one of the first hotels, there intending to take up our abode as long as we remained. Alfred Usburn had many letters of introduction to several of the *élite* of the Irish metropolis. We were soon, therefore, immersed in pleasant engagements, and proved by demonstration the truth of the hospitable character of the nation.

I was much pleased with the appearance of this very handsome city; most of its public buildings being on so large and liberal a scale; its principal streets, regular and well built; and the crowning object of interest, its noble university, challenging the admiration and homage of every stranger. With

several of the students and fellows we soon became acquainted; and much was I delighted with their various erudition, as well as amused at their racy humour. I soon pronounced the opinion, that of all men I had yet met, a well-educated Irishman was the most pleasant and piquant companion. There is a buoyancy of spirits belonging to them, with such ever-ready wit, invention, and peculiar humour, that one never, or rarely, meets in combination on the other side of the channel; they strike and fascinate at the first interview: and an Englishman, from their warm and frank - demeanour, imagines that their character and peculiarities may be understood at once; however, in many instances he afterward finds out that his penetration was somewhat at fault, in forming this opinion.

I, with my usual impetuosity, was disposed to be extravagantly delighted with almost everything I saw, or every body I met. The lighter atmosphere, and more mercurial temperament of the people, soon put to flight my English gloom, and invested me for a while with a degree of the native elasticity; I entered into their peculiar humour almost immediately, and seemed to understand and enjoy it

much more than my philosophic friend, who appeared somewhat out of his element.

"I own I am amazed," said he one day to me, after we had been a short time in Dublin, "at the alteration in your mood and mien; " the Irish air seems to have infected you with Irish gaiety, for you are as mirthful as any of the natives; but more do I marvel at your appearing so outrageously amused at, what seems to me, their very equivocal wit."

"My dear fellow," said I, in reply, "I plead guilty to both your charges; I feel disposed, strangely disposed, considering my *triste* temperament, to be gay and jocund; the *insouciance* that belongs to the climate, has certainly put to flight my English vapours. I am amused, too, as you remark, exceedingly amused with our Irish friends humour, for I do not exactly call it wit; it seems to me more a peculiar species of national drollery, of grotesque combinations, such as would never enter an English imagination even in dreams; and there is likewise so much comic effect in many of their sayings and doings, that I am compelled often to laugh in spite of myself."

"Well," said he, "I must still wonder, that you, who are in general so grave and earnest in manner and style of mind, and who seldom even attempt a pun, that you should so enter into, and be diverted with, this same facetiousness? I must, I suppose, want the necessary faculty for understanding it, for I seldom am amused by their sallies, or understand their point."

My friend's conclusion was a just one—he did want the requisite faculty; and I have met with many other of my own countrymen with the same obtuseness; they have appeared perfectly insensible to much of the most racy kind of Irish humour; they could not understand anything so much out of their own mode of thinking, or their own attempts at wit.

I was, when I reflected about it, almost amazed at myself; for an airy and mirthful mood of manner and mind had, as my friend remarked, usurped the place of my usually calm and grave demeanour; instead of my reflective and somewhat sombre habits, had appeared a gay and jocund, almost careless, sort of air. I entered heartily into the hilarious spirit of the parties we frequented, and

laughed and chatted with the gayest and the lightest. I never had much talent at repartee, but, as if inspired by those around me, I became almost witty.

The grace and freedom and liveliness of the fair dames of Erin suited well the then somewhat anomalous state of my mind. I complimented them in a more sentimental and energetic strain than they had been accustomed to hear; thereby I became popular, and my company sought after. Since my rencontre with Lady Elizabeth Danvers, I took care that my attentions should be of such a general character, that no mistake could arise as to their meaning. There was no *one* fair lady, who particularly interested me. I fancied that I never could really love again. However, in this I was, alas! mistaken; but that did not come to pass for a while.

The greater freedom from the formality and restraint that at this period was observed in London society, pleased me much. The liberty to call at an agreeable house at almost any hour of the day, and stay as long as one pleased, being entertained with lively talk or sweet music, suited well my

mood. I availed myself often of our entrée, and thus whiled away the morning hours.

Who would have recognized in me, at this time, the once meditative, serious, and at one period zealous disciple of John Wesley? I was fast sinking into a mere every-day trifler; though, as yet, no startling breach of the moral law had alarmed my conscience into a perception of my downward course!

My health had been much benefited by the change of air and scene; for the first time for several years, I felt in perfect health: this circumstance may account, in some degree, for the lightness of my spirits.

Those only who have suffered from any dormant, or chronic indisposition—not ill enough to employ a physician, or openly complain; not well enough to enjoy any thing, or exert themselves either mentally or corporeally—such only, can understand the complacent, delightful sensation, which renewed health brings: everything in nature wears a smile—the pulses beat but to enjoyment—the present sense of vigorous existence is almost enough to satisfy one; it seems sufficient to be a breathing

denizen of so fair a world! I speak of the first intervals of restored health; when it becomes a permanent state, the benefits are forgotten, and other cravings are felt.

My friend's business compelled him to prolong his sojourn in Dublin longer than he wished. He sympathised little with my predilection for this country, and wanted to get back to England as fast as possible. However, there were some inquiries to be made in Cork, relative to the law affair he came about, and thither he announced he must go before he left Ireland; of course, I determined to accompany him. "I shall hasten my business there as much as possible," he said to me, "for I long to go back again to our own England—the land that suits my style of thinking, better than any I have yet ever found or dreamed of."

"Confess then," said I, in a tone of banter, "that there are more things in Ireland than are understood by your philosophy, wide and grasping as it is."

"I leave the solving of those important enigmas involved in Irish wit, certainly to the superior sagacity of my friend, learned therein," replied he in

a caustic tone; "I aspire not to the distinction of understanding that which appears to me so utterly frivolous."

"But it is an ingredient that enters so largely into the national character," persisted I, not choosing to notice his chafed humour—"that I cannot consent for you to discard it thus lightly; besides, Alfred, what is become of your favourite axiom, "freedom from prejudice?" in this instance at least; your peculiar predilections have warped your calm reason; you seem to forget the striking instances we have met of native talent and great capabilities; the men of various erudition, and extensive research;—and surely the quickness of apprehension in the mass, and their fertility of resource, must make up for our more serious thinking and energetic, patient acting.'

"There may be something in what you say," replied he in a more genial tone; "but you are as much misled by your predilections in another direction; however, I am beginning to despair of either freeing myself, or expecting others to be exempt from prejudice; we cannot wholly soar above the mental mists that surround us; we cannot wholly un-

shackle ourselves from the chains of interest or sympathy wherewith we are bound by destiny."

I found my friend was beginning to philosophize, and generalize, and, as I had no mind *then* for more abstruse speculation, I let the conversation drop.

My mind continued in much the same volatile state while we remained in Dublin. I met with many persons who amused and interested me at the time; but none that made a sufficiently permanent impression, for me to loiter on my road to describe.

Were I writing a romance, enough could be spun out of many an amusing incident, to season, and make it more entertaining. If my object were merely to amuse, and had I the power to catch the airy nothings, the sparkling effervescence, from the conversation of many of those I met with, my record would, no doubt, be more piquant: but such is not my design; I write with a deeper, higher object in view, or I would not have chosen the grave and sombre narrative of my own life; which, though eventful enough in some of its parts, yet, it must be remarked, these events arise in the common order of sequence, and are not blended or involved with anything like the art of fiction. Just such is

the difference between an invented and a real history; the latter may have even more romantic or unlikely incidents, to fill its pages; but they are not brought about with the dramatic effect of the former,—yet, surely the moral of the one should be more powerful and lasting than the other.

CHAPTER XIX.

“ I took her for a fairy vision
Of some gay creature of the element,
That in the colours of the rainbow lives,
And plays i’the plighted clouds. I was awe-struck,
And, as I passed, I worshipped.” MILTON.

We at length left the gay and handsome capital of Ireland, where I had spent so pleasant a visit : we were there nearly two mouths, but it appeared scarcely one. Travelling in those days was very slow, and we had ample time to see and notice the country that we passed through. Much did we, in common with others, deplore the poverty, and often wretchedness, of the peasantry. However, as there has been, at all times, enough said and written about Ireland in all its imaginable aspects, I forbear to give my own opinions on the very trite subject ; my remarks are confined to some slight observations and speculations on the national character. With its statistics or politics, I have nothing to do.

Alfred Ustern had told me that he should go to the house of an old friend of his father’s who

resided in Cork, and there, most probably, take up his abode, for the short time he remained in that city; and added, he understood Irish hospitality well enough to be certain that his friends would be equally glad to see me. I objected to this arrangement, and determined on staying at an inn. Accordingly I stopped where the coach had put us down, and my friend went to the house he spoke of, saying he would soon rejoin me. Very shortly, a carriage was sent, to convey my luggage and self to this gentleman's abode, he coming himself to insure the acceptance of his invitation. As he would hear of no refusal, I was obliged to accompany Alfred's hospitable friend.

And here, if I were to consult my feelings, I would hurry whole years into a few lines, and thus escape much that is most agonizing to recall. But it must not be: I have vowed to give a faithful record of my life, and a true register of my conscience;—the vow which is registered in heaven, must be fulfilled. I must be even more diffuse than hitherto, to account for what afterward came to pass.

Mr. O'Sullivan—for so I shall call the gentleman in question, I veil for many reasons his real name—resided in a very handsome house, everything about which, betokened an expensive and thoughtless style of living; he was a good specimen of the genuine Irish gentleman of that day—hospitable, profuse, involved. My friend had given me a hint that our host most probably was more of a *bon vivant* than would suit either of our tastes, but that he had heard his daughter was a lovely girl, who may well make amends for any failure of agreeableness in her father. I, who felt perfectly indifferent on the subject, assured him it was quite immaterial as to the peculiar humour of a man with whom we should associate so short a time—but observed, I was glad to find there was a fair demoiselle in the house, as I feared it was the abode of a bachelor.

We were only just in time to dress for dinner, and, when we descended to the drawing-room, found several other guests there assembled. The young lady, referred to, presided at her father's party, his wife having been for some time deceased. We were introduced in proper order. Report had not

exaggerated, when it had pronounced her lovely; for a more radiant creature had my dazzled eyes never before gazed on; and the fascination increased when she spoke and smiled; there was so much archness and humour in her expressive countenance, that she seemed to me a very Hebé of smiles and mirthfulness. I was struck and delighted with her beauty at first sight, just as I might have admired and rejoiced in the surpassing loveliness of a fair child; for the complacency I felt seemed only the natural pleasure arising from a keen sense of the beautiful. I contrived to sit near her at dinner, and exerted myself to be entertaining: latterly I had sufficient practice in light and trifling conversation, and knew how to give it a turn of piquancy and momentary interest. Her manners and accent were purely national—*then*, I thought both delightful. Well and gracefully did she reply to my badinage; nay, shortly took the lead in it: how much zest did she contrive to impart to subjects, I should at one time have imagined it utter folly to have wasted a thought on!

After the ladies—for there was a young friend who accompanied Miss O'Sullivan—had retired from

the dining-table, I took the opportunity for the first time to notice our fellow-guests. Most of them appeared mere fox-hunting squires, jovial fellows, who spent life mostly in hunting and drinking. There was nothing to be extracted from their company, and, as soon as good breeding allowed, Alfred Usburn and myself essayed to leave the room, in order to join the ladies. Much to our annoyance, we were most uproariously prevented by their declaring we had not drunk half enough, and they would allow of no such innovation. We pleaded our English customs, and our inability to stand their strong potations. It was in vain, we were obliged reluctantly to sit down again, chafing with ire and disgust. I felt immeasurably annoyed and provoked, and my friend, judging from my manner, that, if kept much longer, an explosion would ensue, went up to Mr. O'Sullivan, and whispered in his ear—it may be some talismanic words, for I knew not their import—but he soon after contrived, by helping us to manœuvre a little, to effect our escape from this ungenial atmosphere.

Other ladies had arrived in the drawing-room, when we ascended there; but not one that could

in the least compete with Dora O'Sullivan. The amusements were those usually met with in fashionable Irish parties—abundance of good music, and mostly, before they separate, dancing.

I was ever passionately fond of music—who, that has a soul, is not?—but for dancing, apart from religious motives, I had an utter contempt. It used to appear to me so absurd, to see tall, large, often awkward men and women, stand up to amuse themselves, as if they were Brobdignagian children—to enter upon an exercise that requires, for its toleration, lightness of heart as well as heel—the inartificial grace of childhood, or very early youth, when it may be considered as a fitting mode for throwing off some of the natural gaiety and redundancy of animal spirits belonging to that joyous period of human existence: but for sober, thinking, *heavy* men and women, to attempt this sylphic exercise, and imagine it a *rational* amusement; verily I could often, with the philosopher Democritus, have laughed till I had wept at such monstrous folly!

But after these repeated thoughts and convictions, would any one believe that I should be weak enough, actually to have wished this evening to be

able to stand up and join the dancing, and was mortified, when pressed by our beautiful hostess to do so, to confess I was ignorant of the accomplishment? I was asked, of course, how that could be? and here I had to enter into a bungling defence of the reasons. When I attempted to really argue on the actual nature of the thing, and to demonstrate its absurdity, I was playfully stopped by my fair questioner, who declared, "It was the most exciting and delightful amusement in the world, and she should lose half the pleasure of her existence, if obliged to forego it."

And well did her light and graceful movements and pleasure-beaming face, as she glided through the evolutions of the dance, comport with her declaration. For the first time, I beheld this un-intellectual species of recreation with interest! Dora O'Sullivan had invested it with the grace of congruity!—it seemed so suited to her light and agile figure, to her mirthful, and apparently happy nature. I watched her flittings with intense interest! I envied Alfred Usburn—who, though having the same sentiments as myself respecting dancing, had yet in his boyhood been taught it, and could

therefore, when pressed to do so, stand up to join the gay fantastic throng : he danced, of course, with Dora—all seemed anxious to do so. I felt something like an incipient pang of jealousy, as I watched their animated talk, and her joy-flashing eyes, during the time they were together.

It was very evident she preferred our company to that of the other young men in the room ; we were strangers, and English—on both accounts desirable ; most of her other beaux were much of the same class as we had seen at dinner ; there was in nearly all of them a deficiency of refinement, or what, in England, would have been thought high-breeding.

My sojourn in London had initiated me into the mysteries of these things : conventional, and often artificial, as they are, how great an influence do they exert on our first impressions of persons ! How great too is the charm of manner ! superficial as it confessedly is, yet it is worth the trouble of taking pains to acquire ; particularly when it conceals, as is often the case, by its varnish, the utter hollowness of the heart beneath !

When I retired to rest that evening, it was in a

very perturbed state of mind. I tried to banish the fair apparition that haunted me ! I tried to exorcise it, by endeavouring to think of my first and buried love ; strange it seemed, that her cherished image should now be reflected, in memory's mirror, in faded colours—in dimness of outline : ever and anon, it was displaced by a bright, young, radiant face ; a round and graceful form, that seemed to stand out in bold relief, and to eclipse every other image or remembrance. At last I gave myself up to the blissful illusion, and went to sleep dreaming of the delightful Dora.

Every day some excursion was planned for our amusement. High-bred horses were at the door each fine morning, to convey us to see some of the interesting and beautiful scenery that surrounds Cork. Dora could ride incomparably well, she managed her spirited horse in a masterly manner, and enjoyed herself while on him, with all the buoyancy of youthful blood, excited by a slight appearance of peril. I never had much liked riding, and had seldom practised it ; but now, taking care I had the most gentle charger of the lot, I learnt to enjoy equestrian exercise.

Alfred Usburn had appeared to have thrown off his cynical mood, and, under the inspiring influence of our charming hostess, had become quite genial and lively. He did not seem to admire her with anything like the vehemency I did ; he rallied me often about my rapturous mode of speaking of her, but still I was somewhat afraid his usual ice was thawing. She was just the sort of being, I thought, to melt the obduracy of a stoic—to tempt the sanctity of a saint. I speak thus strongly, because it is necessary to make the fact, of my utter bewitchment, comprehensible. She was so perfect an opposite to the woman I had first loved and won—was such a striking contrast, too, to my own character—and yet I soon loved her, oh ! how madly did I love her !

She was a light-hearted, airy, careless, or, I may add, thoughtless being, who existed but in the present : she possessed a good deal of talent and tact, but very little capability of reflection, or judgment : she had read little else than the lightest publications of the day : what mind she possessed, was therefore sadly uncultivated ; and yet it was not ignorant ; with the quickness which characterizes

her country, she soon seized upon the most meagre information, and turned it to account; she could, on this slender stock, talk tolerably well. I was surprised, when I thoroughly knew her, at the very superficial amount of knowledge that had been made to appear so much larger. But it was not often she trusted to these sources for fascination; her person and manners she knew were irresistible. I, who had been such a worshipper of *mind*, who had supposed an angel could not have pleased me, had it been possible to have imagined one without high intellect—even I succumbed to her outward attractions. 'Tis true, indeed, I tried to persuade myself of her innate capabilities, of her possessing a fair share of mental endowments, which only wanted a fostering hand to develope; and I longed to be the one, to undertake the delightful task of informing the mind of this fair creature.

But it may be asked, where was my moral and spiritual sense all this time? had I never thought as a *Christian* would think of this entanglement? had I never asked what claims had the object that had so engrossed my affections, to the character of even a thinking being, on the most momentous sub-

jects? Could I fairly suppose, from her general demeanour and conversation, that she had ever seriously thought of any world but this?—had ever any aspirations after a better? Then her notions of duty, her moral standard of action, of what nature were they?—I ought to blush at the confession, that these obvious inquiries I put aside, when they intruded themselves at that time.

One scene of amusement followed another in rapid succession; we always seemed to be in movement: no time was allowed for pause or reflection. The morning rides, and evening parties, where I followed my enchantress like her shadow, left me no time for thought.

My infatuation—for such it was—must have been evident to all observers. Dora herself behaved to me with as much unembarrassed freedom, as if she, at least, were not conscious of the nature of my sentiments. Sometimes this easy complacency piqued my vanity; and I would fear her heart was not in the slightest degree touched by any sentiment towards me. I would then for a time remit my devoted attentions; but one encouraging smile, or sweet inquiry as to the cause of

my gloom, would bring me again a willing slave to her side.

After a short time of going on thus, Alfred Usburn spoke seriously to me on the subject. I answered frankly and decidedly, that I loved, passionately loved, Dora O'Sullivan, and that I had determined on endeavouring to gain her hand and heart.

"Perhaps," said he in a tone of meaning, "it will be more easy for you to gain the one than the other?"

"How! what do you mean?" asked I, in a voice of alarm: "is it her alliance, or her affections, you think so difficult to acquire?"

"You are rich and handsome," said he with point, "two weighty reasons why your proposals should be accepted."

"But," said I, "that does not satisfy me. Surely you cannot think that that radiant creature, whose nature seems as transparent as her complexion, would ever consent to be bartered for money? beside, what reason have you to suppose that her affections are so difficult to gain?"

"Really, my dear John," replied he, "you look

so angry, and question me in so fierce a tone, that I had better decline all answer. I little thought your love had made you so sensitive to a little unmeaning badinage. By all means strive to win the fair Dora; do doubt you will succeed; and may you be as happy as I wish you. But had you not better first count the cost? hear all the drawbacks that lessen the value of so glittering a prize? Are you aware, that your lady-love must not expect a shilling from her father; on the contrary, *he* will expect a large settlement, from whoever thinks of marrying her. Do you know, too, that she belongs to the communion of the church of Rome? How would that circumstance agree with your former religious opinions?"

"But why," asked I, excitedly, "why did you not apprise me of this last fact sooner? As to the other, it was unnecessary to mention it at all; but you have done wrong and unkindly, by not letting me know so important a piece of information when first we came to this house."

"My dear fellow," said he coolly, "how could I possibly divine that you were to fall in love so soon with my old friend's daughter? beside, what con-

sequence did I suppose it could possibly be to you, what religious notions a man held; at whose house we only intended to stay a few days? it has extended to weeks, merely because you so willed it; and I have been beguiled of too much time also: but I linger no longer on this enchanted ground—to-morrow, if the vessel sails for Plymouth, I go in her. You can do as you please about accompanying me."

What a state of mental anarchy, of wild commotion, was my mind thrown into, when Alfred Usburn left me to ponder on what he had said, to decide how I should act! I was convinced it was my duty to fly from this scene of temptation, and the beautiful syren to whom I had delivered up my heart; for I felt, that even could I have hoped Dora O'Sullivan had possessed all the piety and strict sense of duty that characterize some of the more exemplary members of her church, still there would have been such a great chasm between us on religious views and feelings, that little concord or happiness could have been hoped for, from such an union.

But I had not, either, this refuge to fly to: as far

as I could judge, she had few, if any, serious ideas, of whatever class : she seemed to act, I was obliged to own, from impulse rather than principle. Bigoted she certainly was not, or I should have found out before now, what I was beginning to suspect, that she belonged to a church antagonist to my own. I had observed, on the two Sundays we had been resident in the house, some slight cold or indisposition was given as a reason why Dora did not go out. I discovered afterward that she had been to their early service, but did not *then* choose to avow it. As to her father, I never thought of inquiring about his movements. I hardly supposed he attended any place of worship.

Now, though my mind was in such a very different state to what it had been before my visit to London, and though the deteriorating process had been progressing since my stay in Ireland, yet let it not be thought I had at *this* time forgotten all my previous experience, foregone *all* my religious hopes. True, they were dim and indistinct, and intermittent. I prayed, but seldom with fervour, though I gave not up the form. I fancied that I had been mistaken in some of my former notions,

that they had been narrow, and illiberal, and excessive. But I still reverenced the leading truths of revelation, and I could not consent to part with its consolations. My mind was in a singular position at this time.

One prominent duty seemed now to lie before me, one safe, though painful path to pursue. I determined to leave next day with my friend.—I felt a glow of satisfaction, as I arrived at this resolve. “I must leave this place, so fatal to my peace and best hopes,” said I to myself; “I must tear myself away from this seductive atmosphere; I will be my own banisher, and not require, like the pupil of Mentor, another hand to force me in spite of myself from the enchanted island.” Instead of thus vaunting, I ought to have knelt in spirit, and implored the assistance of Him who was strong enough to have delivered me from my perils.

I began to pack up, and arrange every thing for my departure on the morrow. I had made no formal declaration of love to Dora, though it may have been understood from the whole tenor of my proceedings—still she had never appeared to have comprehended any thing unusual in my conduct:

it was therefore unnecessary, I thought, to assign any particular reason for my sudden resolution. I had lately felt some pique at her free and disengaged air, and it was now with some emotions of curiosity that I waited for the time when I should announce my intentions. I contrived that day to leave the dinner-table almost immediately after herself. I followed her to the drawing-room—she was alone. “Have you heard from our mutual friend Alfred,” I begun, “that I have altered my intention, and mean to accompany him to-morrow, if the vessel sails then?” I watched narrowly her countenance, while making this announcement, and saw it change most remarkably: she tried to speak, but appeared unable; after a moment’s pause, she rose from her seat, and, staggering to the sofa, almost immediately fainted on it.

I was violently alarmed, but determined not to call for assistance, hoping, when she recovered, to hear, now, what seemed to me to be the only thing on earth worth hearing, a confession of her love. I soon succeeded at getting possession of some restoratives, and with their aid she began to recover. I was necessarily on my knees while administering

the remedies required, and remained in that position after sense and animation seemed restored. At length I said, in an agitated tone, "Dora, I rise not from this, until you tell me, whether or not the illness from which you are now recovering has arisen from any interest you feel in me or my proceedings? speak one word only, and put an end to my torturing anxiety."

"Why should you ask me, or seek to know?" said she in a softer and more subdued tone than I had ever heard before; the tears gushing at the same time into her beautiful and lustrous dark eyes: "why should you wish to know any thing about me, when you intend, cruelly intend to leave me to-morrow, and for ever?—to leave me, oh! how alone, how desolate!"

"It is enough," said I, "wildly starting up, it is enough, beloved of my soul! if you desire it, and say but the word, no earthly power shall ever part us more! Dora, I need not tell you how passionately, how madly I love you."

It is unnecessary to detail further what passed at this most exciting interview; it is enough to say that we became pledged to each other in the most

solemn manner. I spoke, tenderly spoke, about the differences in our religious creeds. She promised all reasonable compliance and compromise. I was too much absorbed by the present delirious sense of bliss, to enter much into the matter, or be disturbed by its intrusion—all future interests seemed merged in the overwhelming *now*. Strange and fatal hallucination of frail humanity—that passion should ever so obtain the mastery over spirits who would seem enabled, by their very constitution, easily to triumph over its present excitements—its present cravings !

CHAPTER XX.

• For what admir'st thou, what transports thee so—
An outside? fair, no doubt, and worthy well
Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love,—
Not thy subjection."

MILTON.

THE next day my friend left us, according to his intention. I told him what had altered my resolution of accompanying him. He was too wise to give any after-advice, when the die seemed cast. Mr. O'Sullivan's consent was soon obtained, when he found I made no objection to the settlements he wished, and asked no fortune with his daughter. He knew, from Alfred Usburn, that my property was considerable, and unimpaired; this was all he cared about knowing. I wished to have taken Dora with me, to live in England: but she objected to it; and I, who had many reasons for not liking to visit my Cornish dwelling again, determined for the pre-

sent to take up my abode in Cork. I, accordingly, took one of the handsomest houses in the place, and it was furnished under Dora's superintendence.

The round of visiting and amusement we were now engaged in, suited well my mood. I strove to banish reflection. I wished to try another phasis of existence. The vanities of life assumed a new value in my eyes—the trifles of it a new importance. Among our host of friends, there were a few of superior talents,—with these I essayed to shine in their own style—by repartee, and epigrammatic brilliance. Dora, too, excelled in this way, and it was the species of cleverness she best understood and valued. As for the higher exercises of mind, the more exalted goings forth of intellect, they seemed to have forsaken me—there was no one near who would have sympathized in them.

But every emotion was for a time absorbed in the one ruling passion of my heart. I now, at this distant period, cannot help wondering at myself, for the extent of the infatuation—it set at nought all previous predilections, all previous experience and reasonings—it could not be accounted for by any probabilities of my former mental condition.

I seemed to be the tool of destiny, and to be moved at the pleasure of another! I was given up in fact "to walk in the sight of my eyes," and "after the desire of my heart!" There was none—I can now well remember—of the sweet calm repose, the divine peace, attending my first happy and holy courtship. I was in continual feverish excitement—often, nervous agitation and hurry. I soon felt, too, the pangs of jealousy beginning their torment. Dora's free and familiar manner to other gentlemen annoyed and vexed me. I wanted her to love me as devotedly as I did her, and to be as exclusive in her outward demonstrations of interest. This she would by no means agree to, but parried my complaints with so much skill, that I felt ashamed of myself for having made them.

She was evidently very fond of admiration, and had no idea of being contented with my single tribute. She enjoyed being in a whirl of company continually, and would have thought the evening dull, if her papa had not invited several other guests to join us.

This often vexed and chafed me—I wanted more of her sole society—I wished to sound more

thoroughly her principles and capabilities. The attempt seemed vain. "She will be improved, certainly," I thought, "by matrimony—then she will feel it necessary to live more for me than she does now: she is young and thoughtless, and has never had the benefit of a mother's training, since she was a mere child; besides, as I am so much older—Dora was nineteen, myself about thirty-five—I must necessarily assume somewhat the character of a mentor, as well as husband, and, with her sweet disposition, it will all be well, and my task will be a happy one."

Notwithstanding these attempts at self-delusion, my heart would often misgive me when alone, and I would form almost the half wish that I had remained firm to my first and virtuous resolution of quitting Ireland altogether, and flying from the creature that had thus spell-bound all the higher energies of my spirit. But when I rejoined her, one smile of blandishment, one endearing word, would lull all previous suspicions, or forebodings to sleep, and I became again her willing, her devoted captive.

Mr. O'Sullivan hurried as much as possible every

preparation for our wedding, alleging as a reason, that he wanted soon to leave Cork for England, and wished to see Dora married before then. I was glad that it should be so: rest or pause was irksome to me; beside, I longed for the time when I might consider the beautiful Dora my very own.

The day at length arrived: we were married with much pomp and circumstance,—first by a Protestant clergyman, afterwards by a priest of the church of Rome. I was rather startled when this was first proposed, but I had gone too far to recede; beside, I had been endeavouring to reason away all that Alfred Usborn had called my exclusive notions, and had now arrived at a very accommodating pitch of liberalism. I had persuaded myself that every ~~held~~, held with sincerity, must be equally acceptable to the searcher of hearts. I recollect, with satisfaction, indeed, the bright and shining lights that had illumined the church of Rome from time to time, in past ages. I recalled to mind some living witnesses of the existence of earnest, sincere piety, amongst persons of her creed. I hoped—for I had not yet given up hoping on such subjects—that my Dora might prove one of

these exemplary members of her communion; beside, I thought in time to influence her by mild persuasion, by appeals to her reason, to embrace a more simple and scriptural system of religious faith. Thus I reasoned, and in this way I reconciled myself to taking a step so contrary, in every way, to my previous views and feelings.

After our marriage, a succession of visits left us as little time as before, for domestic quiet. After a few weeks, when they were in some degree over, I intimated to Dora the wish I felt, that our course of life should be somewhat different—that we should not see such an everlasting succession of company, that there might be more time for reading and mental improvement. For the first time, the painful comparison forced itself upon me—the different manner in which Agnes used to receive any of my intimations.

Dora looked displeased, and almost indignant, “You take upon yourself, full soon, I think,” said she, “the authoritative tone of a husband. You told me often, that you would never discard the character of a lover—but men’s vows are as frail as those who trust them.”

"You mistake me, my beloved Dora, if you suppose I wish to exercise any undue authority; but surely you would not have me suppress my reasonable requests, or suppose I would consent to lead the distracted life we have hitherto done? You know, you used to bid me wait till this period, when all the necessary preparations and excitements of our marriage were over, to enjoy the quiet of domestic life, for which I have longed so many months!"

"A pleasant life I shall lead, truly," said she petulantly, "if I am to be imprisoned at home, and all the delightful liberty of my father's house exchanged for dull domestic lectures!"

I looked at her with a surprised and almost bewildered air, and was going to leave the room in silence, when she burst out in a flood of hysterical weeping. My repulsed affection rushed back, at the sight of this beautiful being in tears, and I returned to her with soothing words and relenting purposes.

Thus often was I beguiled of my better resolutions. I used frequently to determine exercising my lawful authority, and insist on a different mode

of life ; but when I attempted any positive practical amendment, I had to encounter cutting remarks on my tyranny, or violent weeping and illness, on the occasion. Dora knew her power too well, to allow me the exercise of my free-will. It distressed and unnerved me to see her in tears and unhappy. I was afraid of losing her affections, had I proceeded to act in contradiction to her wishes. Of her love I was always tenacious. I was tormented with the fear that her heart was not mine—that she had married me from other motives than those of affection. Many slight circumstances in her conduct contributed to foster this idea.

Since our marriage, my jealousy had a good deal slumbered. Dora was more reserved towards other men, though still sufficiently free ; but as yet I was unacquainted with much of the deep depravity of high life. I considered the marriage bond so sacred, particularly in regard to women, that to suspect any impropriety after they had entered on its serious duties, seemed to my mind, a thing not to be thought of, or for one moment tolerated.

The circle I had mingled in, during my visit to London, had been one of the most correct, as well

as exclusive, and Alfred Usburn had never made me acquainted with any of the improprieties he may have heard of in any others. Thus, in marrying Dora, I had imagined all causes for jealousy removed; I should as soon have supposed she would have suspected me of paying undue attention to ladies, as I her, of receiving them from gentlemen.

Still my mind was not at rest—matrimony had not this time shed its hallowed, calming influence o'er my spirit—how should it, when my motives were so different, my affections so disturbed?

I began to tire of the gay humour of the people, of their never-ceasing craving for amusement. The wit that had first delighted and beguiled me, now seemed empty and tiresome. I yearned for the more thoughtful, earnest characters of my own country. Occasionally, when in these gloomy moods, would Dora come into my study, radiant with smiles and bloom, becomingly and richly dressed for some party; and, in her most winning and fascinating manner, asked what ailed or vexed me; and then, assuming her gay mood, laugh and rally me out of all my previous moodiness, exhibit-

ing so much, of what I fancied, artless affection and simple gaiety, that I would forget all her faults, which by this time I had found out were pretty numerous, and suffer myself again and again to be beguiled from all serious thought or action.

CHAPTER XXI.

" My bird, my flower, my star, my boy !
My all things bright that are,
My spring of earthly joy ;
From thee, heaven is not far,
From thee, its terrene star!"

ARCHER'S -from *Blackwood's Magazine*

THE only event worth recording, or of any moment, that occurred during the first year of our marriage, was the prospect, towards the end of it, of our being blessed with a child. When I was first acquainted with the probability of this delightful fact, I took the opportunity of urging on Dora the increased necessity for taking more care of her health, and the impropriety of going out so often of an evening; but she declared she had never felt better in her life, and that being compelled to stay much at home, would only affect her nerves, and make her low-spirited.

I generally found all remonstrance vain, and in time I ceased to make any. "I shall see what

effect her maternal feelings being called into exercise will have on her," sighed I to myself, "for my influence is powerless and void." I had, too, given up the idea of ever, as I had hoped, playing the part of a mental instructor. So, night after night, I attended her to parties that were now generally most irksome to me. She was too beautiful and young, I thought, for it to be proper she should go unattended by her husband. I would have willingly relinquished this unpleasant duty; but, except to her father—and he seldom left the dinner-table soon enough, or sober enough—I would trust her to no other chaperon.

Now, in these parties, it generally happened that cards and dancing were the principal amusements: of the latter I have spoken; and after my marriage, the degree of interest that Dora had for a short while infused into it, ceased altogether. I did not approve of her dancing so much as she did; but I would not stop it by a mere act of authority, for some time. As to card-playing, I knew so little of its merits or demerits, when I first visited Ireland, and felt so little interest in the subject, that perhaps, but for very weariness, I might never have

increased that knowledge; now, I was so utterly tired of looking on amusements I could not join, and felt so much wretched ennui and vapidity, that, as a resource from these—though, as I owned at first, a very poor one—I learnt two or three of the most popular games. For some time I played merely to beguile time, and felt but slight interest—gradually, the stakes were increased, and I began to feel a little excitement from play.

Let any one beware how they enter into temptation! here was a thing that I had not the slightest drawing towards—which at one time I thoroughly despised and contemned—that was not in affinity with any of my natural tastes or habits—and yet what power in the end did it obtain over me! However, this was not yet.

In due time, my ears were blessed with the delightful tidings that Dora had borne me a son. The first warmth of affection, which from many adverse circumstances had been something chilled, rushed back to my heart again, when I embraced my blooming wife and sweet child—as soon as they permitted me to do so. Dora seemed delighted herself with our treasure. My own feelings were

almost indescribable : I well remember, though, experiencing an inexpressible gush of devout feeling when I first pressed my infant son in my arms, which impelled me to ejaculate a fervent prayer in his behalf, to the Giver of all good. There seemed to be a feeling allied to holiness, connected with this new-born creature, which caused all that remained of my better nature for a while to revive.

Although the state of my mind was, as is very evident, far different from what it had been—although I had given up all communication with my serious friends, and lived now to myself and my own impulses—still at intervals would return my former yearnings after goodness, and the peace which a sense of the favour of God imparts. I knew I was living in a way not calculated to strengthen these desires, nor consistent with them ; but I seemed bound down by the position and circumstances in which I had placed myself ; and when I would have broken my fetters—have loosened the chain where-with I was bound—the power seemed gone, the strength annihilated. Samson shorn of his prowess, was a striking type of the servitude of my spirit.

If I had had the moral courage, after Dora recovered from her confinement, to have returned to my former home—to have at that time exercised a little wholesome severity, and insisted on her leading a more domestic life, which, by separating her from her old associates and habits, and by gentle and gradual means endeavouring to form new—might have been done: had I done this, from how much sin and misery should we both have been saved! But instead of thus acting, I weakly yielded to her dislike of quitting her native place, and soon every thing went on as before.

The dear child was committed to the care of a nurse hired for the occasion, and from her it received that nourishment, which in all cases, except in decided indisposition, a mother, and *none* but a mother, should impart. I remonstrated loudly against this proceeding; I said, that as Dora was young and healthy, what possible reason could there be, why she should not fulfil a mother's most endearing office? I was answered, that it was the general custom of the country, that ladies never *did* make good nurses; and that the child would never thrive unless the usual plan were adopted.

In this, as in most other things, my opinion was over-ruled, and a nurse was intrusted with our sweet child.

I felt often soured and irritated at this; and insensibly a series of matrimonial disputes clouded the horizon. I sometimes threatened that I would leave Ireland altogether, and lead an entirely different mode of life. Dora dreaded lest this threat should be put into execution; and for a time would be more yielding. But I never could get that ascendancy over her, which the possession of the affections alone confers. I now believe, what I warded off then by hope and self-deception—that Dora never really loved me. She had no very deep capability of affection in her nature, perhaps, but what she had, *I* possessed not.

I had long felt we were essentially unsuitable to each other—but my affection still remained. Was she not my own beautiful wife, I would think; must I not therefore make every allowance for her faults? she was young, had been ill-trained, being nearly left to herself during the time when character was forming—much was to be hoped from time and experience. And so I went on loving still, though

not so dotingly; and hoping for I scarcely knew what.

* * * * *

I must now speak of a character, and a subject, that I approach with horror. Said I not, that the recital of portions of my story would cause my nerves to quiver, my heart to bleed? And verily so it is. But in order to be intelligible, I *must* bring forward the hateful name.

One evening, that Dora as usual was engaged to go out, she told me in the morning that her papa would dine with us that day, and, as he never sat so long at our table as usual, he would accompany her instead of myself; for she had heard me say, I wished to attend a party of literary men, with whom I had some acquaintance. I gladly availed myself of the substitute in the evening, and we set off for our respective parties.

I returned two hours before herself that night. I observed that she looked particularly flushed and excited when she came in; for I had taken a book, and had staid up, waiting her return. I inquired if anything unusual had occurred. She answered in the negative, and soon assumed more composure of

manner. After telling me some trifling details of the evening, she added, in as careless a tone as could be adopted, "But do you know, dear, I met with an old friend of papa's, and acquaintance of my own, at the party, that I have not seen for a long time."

"Some rather unusually interesting acquaintance, if I may judge by your interested expression of countenance," answered I, in a bantering tone. "Not at all, I assure you," said she; "but he wanted very much to see, and be introduced to you, and so papa has invited him to meet us to-morrow at a family dinner-party, to which of course we must go."—"And pray what is the gentleman's name, that honours me with his desire of my acquaintance," said I. "Oh," she replied, "I forgot at first to say his name is Captain Fitz-Henry, of the —— regiment, and he is quartered at the barracks for a short time." I inquired how it happened that I had never heard the name before, if the person in question had been so great a friend of her father's? This question was evaded; and, as I cared but little about the matter, the conversation ceased.

As there generally were stationed at the barracks a pretty strong number of military, and as the

officers were mostly called on, and invited to the houses of the wealthy in the city and neighbourhood, it often chanced that we met them in the circles we visited. Dora had frequently, I found, a passing acquaintance with some of these gentlemen—but having myself little sympathy with their profession or pursuits, I never called on them, or invited them to my house. I was, therefore, somewhat surprised, when Dora, in her most insinuating manner, intimated a wish that I would take an early opportunity of leaving a card at this Captain Fitz-Henry's, as she knew it would so please papa, and give her an opportunity of inviting him to her next evening-party.

I replied, that it must depend on how I liked him, or what sort of man he was. “Oh!” said she, “he is a general favourite, I assure you; but you have such an odd taste, that perhaps *you* may not like him.” “*You* are yourself implicated in that compliment to my taste, at any rate, Dora,” said I; “Ah now,” replied she playfully, “I was determined to get a *rise** out of ye,” as we say in Ireland, “by calling in question your good taste.”

* *Anglice*, passion.

That day, accordingly, I was duly introduced to Captain Fitz-Henry.—He was a man about thirty years of age, that period of life which connects some of the early fire of youth, with the matured knowledge and manners of manhood. He was very handsome, tall, and finely proportioned; but there was an indescribable expression in his face, that revolted me at first sight. The specious libertinism of his character, it must have been, that portrayed itself in a degree on the outward man, and caused me to feel instantly a want of harmony in the effect of his fine features. He congratulated me, as if an old friend of the family's, on my possession of such a charming wife—said matrimony had much improved her, since he had last the pleasure of being in Cork—and talked away like a man who was on the best possible terms with himself, and determined that others should be the same. He had all the easy assurance of a thoroughbred man of the world. I felt displeased and annoyed at his tone of familiarity, and determined to be as repulsive as possible. I staid not long with the gentlemen in the dining-room, as now I

was at liberty to do as I pleased in Mr. O'Sullivan's house.

When Captain Fitz-Henry joined the ladies in the drawing-room, his manners appeared altered for the better. He approached me, and made some remarks of a different and higher nature than I had, from his first style of conversation, supposed him capable. He had, I cannot help thinking, either obtained some further intelligence respecting me, or saw, from his own observation, he must, change his task, before he could hope to get a footing in my house. He now talked well of books and literature, and exerted himself so effectually to gain my good opinion, that I began to think I had been somewhat at first, prejudiced against him. He spoke of his having visited India, his having brought some curiosities from thence, and said he hoped I would do him the favour of inspecting his rarities, as it was a high treat to him to meet with any person who had a taste for virtù. After making good his ground, as it respected myself, he then went to perform the agreeable to Dora. Of course I could feel no annoyance at this. I rather

rejoiced that any one so rational as her new friend *could* be, should occupy her attention.

I sought out, as was now my wont, the card-table, and there beguiled the evening.

Dora, when we were alone, at home, inquired, I thought, rather hesitatingly, how I liked the Captain. Frankly I replied, "Not at all at first, but better on further acquaintance." "Then," of course, added she, "you mean to call, and invite him to our party of to-morrow evening?" "Why" said I, "you know I am not at all fond of those red-coats—they are generally lounging idle fellows, that it does one little good to know." "Well," said she, "it may be so very frequently, but surely there are exceptions to every rule, and perhaps, when you know more of papa's old friend, you may think him one. And did I not hear something about some Indian curiosities that he wished to show you?"

"Ah, true, I had almost forgotten what it was he talked so well and rationally about. I believe, as I have nothing more important to do, I will call at the barracks this morning."

Dora was contented with her advantage; she said no more of papa's *old* friend, at that interview.

I called accordingly, and Captain Fitz-Henry was even more rational and entertaining than before. He had so many and apropos anecdotes to relate—had seen, for so young a man, so much foreign service, and had observed minutely and accurately so much of the peculiar customs and opinions of the different countries and people he had been among—that he amused, and made me feel a desire to cultivate his acquaintance. I invited him to our house, and thus his footing was established in it. At first I observed little in his conduct to Dora, that excited my observation; it was the same, as far as I could judge, that he practised towards all ladies; and which had somewhat more of gallantry in it, than I quite approved, or liked.

However, I thought this idea might be a remnant of my former strict notions; and as I knew the world had a different, and what they termed a more liberal, standard of judgment, I thought I had better, now I was among them, adopt as far as possible their axioms and opinions. Not but that I would still have recoiled with horror at the commission of any actual improprieties; particularly

did I regard, as I have before said, the sanctity of married life with peculiar tenacity; and it was partly because I thought any invasion so monstrous a sin, that my suspicions slumbered so long with respect to Captain Fitz-Henry.

He, for some while, used every art to insinuate himself into my good opinion and confidence. He pretended to be interested in many rational and improving pursuits, and which, to my surprise and delight, Dora wöuld listen and enter into. She appeared more willing to stay at home of an evening, and spend it in company with myself and the captain, in a manner that suited my taste much more than the way in which time was beguiled in crowded rooms.

Our sweet little boy grew both lovely and intelligent. I doted on him; and though Dora was not wanting in the outward demonstrations of tenderness, still I used sometimes to wonder how it was her affections did not seem more absorbed in him. Captain Fitz-Henry would often ask for him to be brought to the drawing-room, in order that he might fondle and play with him: The child became very fond of his gay friend; and his red coat and

appendages seemed to rivet the child's attention and interest. This daring to ingratiate himself with the innocent child of a man, whose peace he was plotting to stab in the most vital part, was one of the minutiae of his villainy, which at this lapse of time I feel to be the most irritating and galling.

After he had visited as *l'ami de la maison* about four months, Dora's rage for parties returned with more eagerness than ever. She used to appear to dislike being alone with me, and to make every imaginable excuse for avoiding it as much as possible. Her temper, which was naturally rather easy and good, now became irritable and fitful. Sometimes her spirits were boisterously high, at others exceedingly low; and when in the least thwarted, hysterics, of which I had a horror, would ensue.

I thought it was but another page cut open in the book of unequal matrimony, and set myself to bear, as I best could, my now unenviable destiny. Strange it was, but no less strange than true, that my wife's coldness rather piqued than repulsed my affection. I could not understand how it was

that Dora alone, should not think me irresistible. I knew what intensity of affection my first angel-wife had borne me. Other ladies—one of whom I have elsewhere named—showed great and decided sensibility to my powers of pleasing : at one time I flattered myself, that few, if any, would have refused my advances; and yet *the woman*, on whom I had lavished the deep affections of my being—she for whom I had given up my country, my friends, and, I may almost add, my God—*she* refused to submit to my influence, to be attracted by my love ! I knew her affections could not be compelled. I longed to possess them, and thought—weak fool that I was !—that unlimited indulgence, unbounded tenderness, must at length work its way, and love would, according to all experience, beget love.

And perhaps in the end this might have been the result, if a viper had not wound its way into her bosom ! Though, possibly, I am mistaken, and that the mode I took was not the right one to manage a mind like her's. I rather think, that more influence might have been obtained by a wise and firm system of authority, and in some degree coercion ; many women, like children, can best be ruled, and

their affection insured, by a degree of severity, mingled, certainly, with tenderness ; and Dora was one of these. She would have more respected me for such a course of conduct, and would have thought it more worth her while to endeavour securing my affections. As it was, they were lavished on her unsparingly, unwisely !

CHAPTER XXII.

—“The hearts, of old, gave hands;
But our new heraldry is—hands, not hearts.”

SHAKSPEARE.

I HASTEN on in my unhappy narrative. The first time my suspicions were at all roused with respect to Captain Fitz-Henry, was one evening that I left home, intending to meet a few gentlemen on some public, or scientific business—all minor details are now nearly forgotten.

Dora was at home alone when I left the house—it was one of the rare pauses from company—before going, I asked her if she expected any one that evening, who had been in the habit of visiting at the house without much prior invitation. She answered in the negative, and said she should not feel lonely, as she had an interesting new book to read, after the baby had gone to sleep, for she should amuse herself with him while he was awake:

The meeting I was to have attended, had, I found, been put off till another evening, and, after taking a walk, I returned home. I went up to the drawing-room immediately, where I had left my wife, and was surprised to hear a man's voice in earnest conversation, as I ascended the stairs. I paused for a second to listen; but the meanness of such a proceeding struck me at once, and I opened the door. Reclining on the sofa was Dora; and Captain Fitz-Henry bending over her—as it appeared to me, from the rapid glance I had, ere the sound of the opening door warned them of my approach.

I was rooted to the spot where I stood—he had that morning told me himself he was setting off for Spike Island, to spend a few days with one of his friends quartered there. I could scarcely credit that I saw aright. For an instant he looked confounded, and but for an instant; for, assuming an easy air of unconcern, he said, " You see, my dear sir, being disappointed of my intended journey this morning, I lounged after dinner down here, hoping to find you at home; and as that was not the case, I have been trying to amuse Mrs. Trevanion, who

has been, I am sorry to say, quite indisposed since your absence."

I now looked at Dora—she had resumed her sitting position, and in a languid tone, with down cast eyes, said, that "it was true she had felt rather faint and unwell, and had been obliged to recline on the couch."

I knew not what to say, or think: "All this might be true---might be the simple state of the case," I considered for a moment: yet my mind misgave me that all was not quite right. I answered, however, in a cold, constrained manner, and appeared to be satisfied.

Captain Fitz-Henry staid not long that evening. When he was gone, I frankly told Dora of my annoyance and uneasiness at the very unusual scene I had witnessed, and that her friend should have been at all present, when he had so short a time before told me he should be far distant from Cork. To this she replied in high dudgeon, that she could not be answerable for Captain Fitz-Henry's movements, or regulate the time he was to call; and reminded me, that I had given him the *entrée* to the house at all hours and seasons. She appeared

indignant that my suspicions should be roused, and, I was glad to perceive, repelled them with vehemence.

I now was on the alert to find out whether any other circumstances should corroborate the suspicions to which the above facts had given rise. My mind was in a chaos of doubt and anxiety. I could say with Othello—

—————
‘ Oh ! now, for ever
Farewell the tranquil mind ! farewell content !’

I understood well the misery of him who—

“ dotes, yet doubts—suspects, yet truly loves.”

My pride, and, what I considered, proper self-appreciation, forbade my saying much to Dora, or letting her know the state of my mind. I endeavoured to act as usual ; but there was a constraint and *gêne* about my manner, that must have betrayed something of the inward feelings. She appeared more affectionate and desirous of pleasing than before; but this, as I afterward knew, was but a *ruse* to blind me.

For a short time nothing else occurred to excite my suspicions, or confirm my fears, until one day I saw her own maid hurry up stairs with a note to her mis-

tress, in a way, and with an expression of countenance, that at once alarmed me. I was standing in such a position and light, that she could not see me; and as she supposed I was from home, she took no care to conceal what she held in her hand. In an instant I stopped her, and inquired who had given her that note, demanding at the same time that it should be delivered up to me. The girl hesitated, and looked dreadfully confused, but held it firmly clenched, and said, that as it belonged to the mistress, she could only deliver it to her. In a voice of thunder, I ordered her to give it me; and seeing it was useless to contest the point, she reluctantly yielded, contenting herself, at the same time, with pouring out a volley of abuse, in the energetic terms of her country, against my tyranny and cruelty. With a trembling hand I tore open the document, and read, as nearly as I can remember, the following lines.

" When am I to obtain another glimpse of the charming, the resplendent Dora? As her tyrant has contrived lately to cut me, I cannot now venture to call at his house, particularly as I knew

not his hours of absence. But why has the lady of my heart been so coy lately of the sunshine of her smiles, when we meet in crowds, as she knows her respectful adorer only asks the bliss of being regarded complacently by those celestial eyes? Pray be at Mrs. —— rout to-morrow evening, I may possibly have an opportunity of then conversing—unobserved by any gorgon watch—with her who is the arbitress of the destiny of her devoted slave."

"A. FITZ-HENRY."

I was roused nearly to frenzy by this impudent avowal of his guilty love. There was nothing in the note certainly that directly criminated Dora; but it was evident from it, he had been allowed to address her in a way that any married woman ought to have considered the most grossly insulting. He had *dared* to speak to her of his love. It now flashed upon me, that she might have known him well, and been more interested in him than she cared to own, before her marriage. A thousand distressing conjectures harassed me.

While I was yet in this perplexity, not knowing how to act, or in what way to proceed, Dora

herself stood before me. Her cheeks were flushed, her whole air and manner bespoke the greatest state of excitement. "I demand my letter, she began—the letter you basely and brutally forced away from my maid;—spy and tyrant that you are, to dare to open any note addressed to me!" When this ebullition was vented, she threw herself on the ground in violent hysterics. I rang for her trusty maid, and left the room, not doing this time what I had never failed to do before—hang over her tenderly, and apply restoratives until she recovered.

I soon formed my plan of action, and resolved on its adoption. Dora might, I thought, by a decisive step, be yet saved. I determined to take her, as soon as possible, to England, and there try what a severance from all old habits and associations could effect. My affection and pride had a severe blow—still the former triumphed. "She is not—I cannot believe her guilty," said I to myself—"weak and vain she may be, but she is my wedded wife, and nothing shall deter me from using every endeavour to win back her affections—to elevate her standard of duty and propriety.

I would not trust myself very soon again in her presence, but wrote her a long letter, such as I thought would have touched any woman's heart. In it I distinctly announced, that I should leave Cork, and take her with me, to my house in Cornwall, in a few days—in fact, as soon as a vessel sailed. I did not now consult her inclinations, or make any reference to them: I wrote in a kind, but determined manner. I would not even restrain her from going to the party the next evening. I argued that an act of arbitrary authority—as she would have deemed such prohibition—would only irritate and estrange her more than before.

I did not choose, however, to trust myself with Capt. Fitz-Henry, and therefore did not accompany her myself, but took the precaution of particularly requesting Mr. O'Sullivan to escort his daughter; and hinted to him, that I feared his military friend had paid her more attention than either he or I would quite approve. This information seemed to move him somewhat: he begged me to be explicit; but I declined saying more, and left him abruptly.

I saw no more of my wife till the next day. When I entered her dressing-room, I perceived she

had been weeping ; her eyes were red and swollen. I asked her if she would be ready to accompany me, in a few days, to England ? She answered sullenly, and with evident ill humour. Her manner throughout that, to me most painful interview, was cold and repulsive. She appeared to acquiesce in my orders to prepare for departure—said she would superintend the packing of her clothes, and be ready at the time I named. I left her with a heavy heart.

" Little prospect is there," thought I, " that she will ever be subdued, either by tenderness or severity—though the latter I shall be slow to try."

The evening before I intended sailing, was necessarily spent in settling various accounts, and other business, that required I should be several hours from home. I returned late, fatigued, and more than usually dispirited. I inquired if my wife had gone to bed ? The servant replied—his mistress had left the house just after myself, with her maid, and had not since returned. Immediately I set off to Mr. O'Sullivan's, supposing she might have gone there, to spend the last evening with her father, who, I ought to have said, had

highly approved of my determination of quitting Cork.

Tremulously I knocked at the door—a strange fear had seized my mind. I dreaded lest Dora might not be there.* Quickly were my forebodings confirmed. Mrs. Trevanion, the servant said, had not called that evening. His master was still in the dining-room, with one or two of his friends. Wildly I demanded he should be sent for. The poor man soon made his appearance; and when he understood the nature of my communication, that his daughter was neither at her own house nor his, and that I knew not where to seek her, his agitation almost equalled my own.

Instantly I proceeded—for I waited not for him to accompany me—to the houses of all our intimate acquaintance. No trace or tidings were to be heard of the fugitive. I returned again to her father's, in a state of utter bewilderment. The night was far spent in the vain search; the remainder was employed by me in pacing up and down the room in agony.

At the first dawn of day, the poor old gentleman proceeded to the barracks—I was too much beside

myself, to take any further active steps, or act with any coherence. His suspicions were then confirmed. The accomplished villain, who was the cause of all this misery and desolation, had been, for the last few months, negotiating secretly for the sale of his commission.—A few days since, it had been effected. He had left his quarters on the previous morning, and had not been since heard of. The commanding officer knew not where he had gone, or anything of his movements.

Mr. O'Sullivan soon after obtained the information that a post-chaise, with a lady, gentleman, and servant outside, had been seen rapidly travelling the Dublin road early on the preceding evening : but the inn-keepers denied all knowledge of this fact ; most probably, where the chaise had been procured, they had been highly bribed to conceal it.



CHAPTER XXIII.

" And he became a maniac, in whose breast
Wild fear, which, e'en when every sense doth sleep,
Clings to the burning heart, a wakeful guest,
Sat brooding as a spirit, raised to keep
Its gloomy vigils of intense unrest,
O'er treasures burdening life, and buried deep
In cavern tomb."

F. HEMANS—*Release of Tasso*

WHAT boots it now to dwell on those "days of darkness" that followed this annihilating blow?—Enough to say, months of mental aberration succeeded. For a short while, I raved incessantly—then succeeded a sullen calm. I have only a confused consciousness of great internal suffering—of a change in my mode of being and feeling. I cannot lay open the secrets of my mental prison-house; the remembrance is too awful to linger on. Slowly and gradually reason resumed her empire—memory arranged her materials—but hope arose not with them, to enliven my awakening; or, if she made any efforts to do so, they were faint and feeble.

Some relief was afforded occasionally by endeavouring to pray, to pour out my burdened heart to Him, who, at one time, had been my “refuge and help;” but generally, despondency prevailed over any goings forth of the spirit of faith. I felt I had in great measure forsaken God, and that he, in retributive justice, had forsaken me—that as I had “sown the wind,” I was reaping “the whirlwind.” Oh ! why did I not repel these hard thoughts of his mercy, and, in the spirit of the prodigal, return in earnestness to my Father ? Then, how much of far deeper degradation should I not have been spared !

But the *habit* of piety had been displaced—its consolations long unsought—therefore it was, perhaps, that, when I thought now of religion, it wore a gloomy and threatening aspect. The most terrific form of what is termed high Calvinism, presented itself to my mind, as, perhaps, the *right* view of the subject. “If so,” I went on to think, “then am I one of the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.” This idea abode with me a long time : to get rid of it, I had recourse to other alleviations than the true one.

In the commencement of my convalescence, my child was brought me. He was grown a fine and beautiful boy, and was beginning to speak—his artless, endearing little ways proved more salutary towards perfecting my recovery, than any other means which had been tried. I doted on him with all a parent's fondness—he seemed the only link that now bound me to a hated existence. His Irish nurse had well fulfilled her trust. She was a faithful, affectionate creature, who would have sacrificed her life for her little charge. She was somewhat of an exception to the usually garrulous women of her order ; my sorrow was too sacred, she felt, to be talked of, for never did she allude to the child's mother in the most distant manner.

Poor old Mr. O'Sullivan did not long survive my recovery. The shock to his affection and pride was too much for him long to sustain, without sinking under it. He could scarcely be brought to speak of his daughter before his decease, in any terms but the most bitter and unrelenting. His embarrassed circumstances, also, much perplexed his latter days. I paid off some of his most unfortunate creditors ; and for this, he died blessing me.

It will be asked, perhaps, by some into whose hands this record may fall, why did I not take steps, as soon as my reason was restored, to seek out, and avenge myself of the destroyer of my peace—the seducer of my wife? I answer, that I had no requisite energy to attempt this. Beside, I was utterly ignorant where to find the villain. Mr. O'Sullivan had, in vain, made every possible inquiry after his lost daughter: he gained nothing but the most vague and unsatisfactory information. The poor man, in his dying moments, besought me not to risk an encounter with the man who had so basely robbed us: he knew, he said, that he was such an excellent shot, that I should have no chance with him. I begged him to be quite easy on this account, as I had no idea of engaging in a duel, even could I find out my injurer. My previous habits and opinions had completely unfitted me for any such mode of retaliation; I feared, either to be hurried myself, or to hurry him, into the presence of his Maker.

I now gave up all idea of quitting Ireland for some years. My son's nurse would not have liked to leave her country—on his account I thought

I would continue—beside, all active exertion was a burden to me.

I was also informed by letters I found waiting my opening, that during my malady my dear old father had died. At any other time I should have felt pungent grief for his loss. Now, it was almost unheeded. I lived for the most part in a sort of stupor; excessive suffering had seemed to benumb my feelings. The springs of life were poisoned at their source, and all my energies paralyzed; I lost all relish too for intellectual pursuits, or any mental exercise." The very constitution of my mind had changed. For a while I lived a mere vegetative life; scarcely an emotion ruffled the dark and stagnant depths of my soul; the interest my child excited, was the only remnant remaining of my former self, the only link left, by which I could recognize my mental identity. Mysterious and awful are man's capabilities and modes of suffering, and fearful is often the consequence of the hidden harmonies of the soul being injured or destroyed ! when it is so,

" Who unto mystic harmony once more
Attune those viewless chords ?—There is but One,
The Mighty, and the Merciful alone !"

When I attempted to draw consolation from calling to remembrance God's goodness to me in former days, the repulsive ideas I have spoken of elsewhere, would drive me back from the contemplation of the subject. The tempter suggested hard thoughts of God and his ways; I even doubted whether all my former experience of religion were not fancy and delusion.

These thoughts would only occur at intervals, for, in general, I, as much as possible, abstained from thinking. In order to get rid of some of the intolerably heavy hours, I yielded to the proposition of an old acquaintance of Mr. O'Sullivan's—a good-tempered, feeling, though common-place man—that I should occupy myself with playing a game of hazard, which only required two persons.

At first it excited me but little—gradually it became more interesting, so that in time the excitement seemed necessary to my existence. I played for comparatively high stakes, with various success.

My new friend could not be with me every evening, therefore, at my desire, he brought to my house first one, then another of his companions, so that

after a time I became intimate with several professed gamblers. This I did not in the commencement know, for they took care to conceal much of their real character. They appeared tolerably well-conducted men ; and though I saw they were evidently merely men of this world, who had not an idea beyond, still I fancied they were only tools for my amusement.

As our company increased, the games varied—some were played, of which I had a previous knowledge. As I became accustomed to this sort of company, it was wonderful how soon I was not only reconciled to, but enjoyed it—that is, as much as any thing *could* be enjoyed, when almost all power of enjoyment had ceased. These men *thought* so little, themselves, except about their every-day palpable avocations, and they required so little exercise of mind to entertain them ; that, in my morbid state, I fancied they exactly suited me. At first they had the tact or good feeling to abstain from any boisterous expression of mirth : I could not *then* have borne it, they knew. By degrees they were less circumspect, still for a long while keeping within the bounds of decorum.

I generally had, after a time, two or three such sort of persons to dine with me: they were accustomed to free potations, and gradually—oh! humiliating confession!—I imbibed a taste for taking more than any reasonable man should do. But this happened a long time after the period I refer to; and it came on so imperceptibly, that I can hardly date its commencement.

The more refined and select company I associated with before my household comforts were broken up and destroyed, ceased to visit me; indeed, I had rather spurned than courted them. I could not bear to see any one who had been on familiar terms with my lost wife; I wished to put aside every person and thing that reminded me of her.

For several years I led this reckless mode of life, getting deeper and deeper in degradation. I have said that the very constitution of my mind seemed changed; and likewise, I may add, all its former tastes and sympathies had departed. My dear little son still lived with me, under the affectionate care of his foster-mother. Was it not wonderful that his engaging innocence, and the love I bore him, did not save me from the abyss of sin, into which

I was plunging? Often, when *thought* would occasionally force its way, and benumbed CONSCIENCE would strive to arouse, in the rebuking presence of my child, I have sent him away, not being able to bear the reflections his artless prattle and sweet innocent countenance would call up. As he grew older, he was sent to a school very near my house, so that I could frequently see him, and had not so often the reproving power of his presence as a check on my misdoings.

The reckless manner in which I lived soon made itself manifest in the state of my finances. Frequently I lost large sums at play; and the want of order and management in my household, caused much more than was necessary to be spent in house-keeping. I was obliged, after a while, to negotiate with an agent to sell my estate in Cornwall—the beautiful seat of my sainted Agnes! While this was pending, I had recourse to stronger stimulants than ever, to ward off the dejection and misery I felt, in spite of all efforts to the contrary, at the associations that *would* intrude with the idea of my Cornish home. To go there now, I felt impossible. I knew too well my own state of degradation, to

bear the idea of appearing before one of the lowliest labourers, in the present condition of my mind.

Let no one suppose it is in his own power to stay his downward course, or regulate, when he would, either the number or the order of his vices. The mind, when once given up to "work iniquity," generally does so "with greediness." The better nature becomes prostrate and crushed under the depraved one. What was once regarded with horror, now ceases to offend—perhaps, in time, appears attractive:—"the light that is in us" becomes "darkness;" and "how" unspeakably "great is that darkness!"

Thus it was, in my case, some of the more entirely vicious of my companions were not content until they had led me into scenes of yet deeper profligacy than even the drinking or gaming table. I, from very weariness of existence, and a constant craving for low excitement, in order to drown thought, suffered myself to be introduced by them into circles of dissipation and haunts of vice, such as I had, till now, no previous knowledge, or the slightest experience of. Thus was I beguiled into

guilt of the most debasing character, without having to plead, as an excuse and extenuation, either strong temptation, or original inclination. The sins of the spirit rather than of the flesh, were those by which I was, by nature, most prone. A high opinion of myself, both morally and intellectually—the thirst for praise and admiration of my fellows—ambition, worldliness, and scepticism—these were the evils which belonged to my original nature; now, was added, the degrading turpitude of the grossest kind of iniquity, to swell the heavy account, and for which, as I have said, the poor excuses of many other men, could not in my case be urged.

I learned, too, the language of my associates. I could not so constantly mingle with them, without adopting somewhat of their profanity and irreverence of speech. My very taste and sense of beauty and fitness seemed to have departed.

The same vices, that in my youth had caused me to despise the poor untaught men, I at that period associated with,—and at which my then comparatively pure mind revolted,—now were practised by me with unblushing openness.

Would that I could with a safe *conscience* avoid these humiliating confessions ! no *human* rack or torture could have extorted them. Nothing but the unspeakable agony of a wounded spirit and an accusing conscience, and a desire to manifest the sincerity of my deep repentance, *could* have induced me thus to note down the memorial of my shame !

Oh, wonderful fatuity of men ! that they should ever make light of sin, and trifle with iniquity ! Could they but feel as I do, the venom of its tooth—the incurableness of its wound—the *eternity* of its remembrance—yes, this idea it is that imparts an intensity to my suffering ; for even could I hope the scarlet stain may yet be blotted out from the book of God's penal remembrance, how shall it, how *can* it ever be erased from the tablet of *my* memory ! What is once done, can never be undone.

The Infinite himself cannot annul the actual commission of sin, though he may, in the riches of his mercy, remit the punishment. Remember this, ye that forget God—that make a mock at transgression—when your eyes are open, as mine

'now are, to behold it in its true character ; you will then feel, perhaps, as acutely as I do, that, should you even escape the punishment, you cannot escape the guilt ; that, though God may, for the sake of his well-beloved Son, forgive you, you cannot forgive yourself ; but must feel a fearful self-loathing —I had almost said—in heaven. Oh ! remember this, and shun every, the slightest approach to the paths of the destroyer !

CHAPTER XXIV.

“ What lured thee from the hallowed dome
Of piety and peace,
Where truth had fixed her favourite home,
Where earthly sorrows cease ?

“ Was it the false, but specious flame
Of earthly pride—of earthly fame ?
Was it the ardour of a soul
That spurned the gospel’s mild control ?

“ If rightly here, my son, I deem,
Where is that wild romantic dream ?
Where are those joys so falsely fair ?
That ecstasy of glory—where ?”

T. DALE—*Outlaw of Taurus.*

ONE day, when in the very midst of leading this wretched life, as I was lounging along one of the more unfrequented walks about Cork, I saw approaching, a man, who of all others I would have given any thing, or gone any where, to avoid ; it was no other than the now venerable John Wesley !

Years had passed since I last saw him, as we had not met since I came to Ireland. He had written me several admonitory letters in the interim, to

none of which I had replied: for a long time, all communication had ceased on either side. I now tried to evade him, and hurry on; but this he prevented; fixing his keen clear eye on me—which age had not dimmed—he made a full stand, and, laying his hand on mine, said in a tone of authority, “Stop, John Trevanian—stop, I bid you in the name of my Master! I have a message for you, and you *must* hear it.” I stood perfectly still—cowering and trembling in the presence of this righteous man.

“Is it true what I hear of thee, poor prodigal,” he continued—“is it true that thou hast so utterly forsaken God, so deeply injured thyself? Is it *indeed* true that thou art running, so madly, the road of the transgressors, which, even *now*, thou findest hard?—thy countenance betrayeth, that in treading these crooked paths, thou hast not known peace! And is this the fair and goodly plant?” pursued he, eyeing me compassionately—“is this the fair and goodly plant, that I verily deemed was of the Lord’s own right-hand planting? Didst thou not find wisdom’s ways to be ways of pleasantness?—were not all her paths—”

to *thee* especially—paths of peace? Hast thou found out a better master, a more liberal rewarder? Is there more freedom in Satan's, than in the Saviour's service? Is *his* yoke easier—*his* burden lighter? Well mayest thou be silent—I see my answer, I read it well in thy ~~changed~~ mien, thy altered brow: peace, and hope, in former days, beamed brightly there—now, I dread to think what evil influences have contributed to stamp *their* mark, instead. I pity thee, John Trevanion, I pity thee from my very soul—thou, who wast in years past my dear, my hopeful son, what would I not do, to succour and to save thee?"

The good old man was so deeply affected, that he was obliged to cease speaking—tears coursed each other down his cheeks, and choked his utterance.

I was dumb and awe-struck before him, and not being able to bear the powerful emotions he had called up, in this interval of silence I suddenly pressed his proffered hand—and darted away from his presence.

CONSCIENCE, which had been so long drugged and deadened, now, for a brief while, awoke at the

voice of the man who had once so powerful and happy an influence over it;—and his person, and every thing associated with him—what power had they to call up old and almost forgotten memories, of youth and bliss, purity and peace! the spirits of my sainted wife and mother came unbidden before my mental vision, as if evoked by his image, and seemed to unite with him in rebuking and condemning me. The agony I endured, while these thoughts lasted, was insufferable; I pressed my hand on my aching temples, and thought madness would again be my portion.

Instead of seeking solitude, and there in spirit prostrating myself before God, beseeching Him to mitigate the severity of my woe—and, for the sake of his Son, give me some glimmering hope of pardon and renewing grace—instead of doing this, I rushed wildly into the most reckless company that could be found, and there, with the aid of intoxicating liquors, tried to drown the convictions, my faithful and righteous monitor had just awakened.

After this interview, I drank deeper than ever, to banish reflection; it was not the love of company, or their example, that excited me to it, but merely to

get rid of thought. I said of myself sometimes, "There is no hope." "His mercy is clean gone for ever." "He will be favourable no more." "I will try to banish all thought of these things: my companions never trouble themselves about the future, never have the tormenting fear of God before their eyes; they appear to live as if they had never heard of a future state. Why cannot I do the same, when, after all, how can I be certain there is one? the present is real, is palpable enough; and the misery I *now* endure from reflecting about what *may* happen hereafter, arises perhaps from superstitious fear. I will throw it off like a man, I will enjoy myself while there is time.

In this manner—striving, against my judgment and convictions, to get rid of even the belief of a futurity, and the God of revelation—I used to reason.

Mr. Wesley had sought out where I lived, and, in the evening of the day I had met him, had called at my house. I had thought it probable he would have thus acted, and took care to be from home, in the company to which I have referred. He was obliged to leave Cork early the next morn-

ing, and so I deemed I had escaped any more rebukes from his presence.

* * * * *

My property from this time dwindled away, as if a moth had consumed it. Most of my present friends would, besides often winning large sums, frequently borrow money of me, which were rarely, or never, re-paid. At length I was one day startled, on being told by a person, who first induced me to draw bills, that there would be several heavy ones due in a few days, and he inquired whether I had funds sufficient to meet them. I hastened to my banker's, and was struck dumb at finding that my accounts had been greatly over-drawn. Time after time, I had instructed them to sell out of the funds for me: and the produce of my beautiful estate in Cornwall was quite spent.

I had now but a comparatively trifling sum in any quarter; and I foresaw, after my debts were paid, I should be, as to property, nearly a ruined man.

I had shamefully neglected looking into my affairs for a long time; I knew I was spending

more than was proper, or prudent; and as I always disliked accounts, it was now doubly disagreeable to have anything to do with them.

I saw at once I should have the miseries of comparative poverty to contend with, after living so many years in affluence and extravagance. My house and splendid furniture were in the end obliged to be sold; every thing went, but a small property that was settled on my son, and a trifling sum left from the wreck. This breaking-up of my establishment happened about four or five years after the interview, of which I have spoken, with Mr. Wesley.

I have said so little about this space of time, because I thought it unnecessary to enlarge more on the sinful and degrading course I was pursuing. Truth obliged me to confess as much as was laid open in the foregoing pages; but it was better, on all accounts, that the minute details of such a sort of life should not have been dwelt longer on, or unfolded more circumstantially, than was absolutely necessary.

Few mortals, perhaps, have had so much experience of life as myself. I have known experimentally

"good and evil, blessing and cursing." I have tasted the peace, the joy, the calm of a religious life. I have experienced the excitement, the stir, the mental activity, of an intellectual one. I have tried the amusing, vapid trifling, laborious idling, of a fashionable one. I have endured the tumult, the restlessness, the *deep* misery of an openly sinful one. Let those who have it still in their power to choose, learn, from my example, which it is wisest to select!

I have only given slight specimens of each of these phases of existence. I have but seized some of the more salient points in my strange history, of which to speak — as I premised — *the half of my mental life could not be told.*

CHAPTER XXV.

“ Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
And these reciprocally those again.
The mind and conduct mutually imprint
And stamp their image in each other’s mint.”

COWPER.

“ When bitter thoughts of conscience born,
With sinners wake at morn,
When from our restless couch we start
With fevered lips and withered heart ;
Where is the spell to charm those mists away,
And make new morning in that darksome day ?”

KEBLE.

I PROCEEDED with the remainder of my sad story. As soon as it was known that my fortune was spent, most of the men who had helped to consume it, looked coolly on, and evidently shunned me. One or two there were, of more kindly temperament, that tried at something like consolation.

My health, I ought before to have noticed, had been declining for some time — no constitution would bear, with impunity, the life I had of late

years led. I was now a mere wreck, both mentally and corporeally, of my former self.

My son—at this time an interesting youth of about fourteen—was yet at school, when the crash in my affairs happened. The master of the establishment, having a great affection for him, offered to keep him still, for a very trifling sum, and promised to employ him in the school as soon as there should be an opening.

My mind by this arrangement was somewhat relieved from the heavy load I endured on his account.

I have said little about him in my narrative; the fact is, that the course of life I had led, almost since his birth, deadened, along with other pure feelings, in a great measure my affection for him.

One of the characteristics of a reprobate mind is, to be “without natural affection;” and, although this was not absolutely my case, it was so in a degree. The habitual indulgence in gross vice seems to have a natural tendency to displace all emotions allied to purity or virtue—they cannot long dwell together in the same heart. Sin, by its hardening quality, petrifies at length all the softer and gentler influences.

But besides this chief reason for my not regarding my son for many years as I ought, there was a certain likeness to his mother, that was apparent to no eyes but my own—for they said he was not nearly so handsome—and frequently a certain look or manner would startle me in a most painful degree, and the associations it called up at the time, would almost induce me to send him away from my presence.

However, when the blow made itself felt with regard to my circumstances; and when I saw nearly all the men who had battened on my prosperity, turn away in cold neglect; then I thought of my neglected son, and wondered if he too would join with others in justly reproaching his spendthrift father.

I hurried in a state of extreme agitation to demand an interview with him. My heart was not humbled, though it was crushed, by my misery. In a stern and hollow voice I thus made known to him the extent of my embarrassments.

“Unfortunate child of thrice unfortunate parents, good had it been for thee never to have been born! I come to tell thee—what others would soon find a

malicious pleasure in bringing to thy ears—that thy father is ruined! is a poor miserable wretch, only one degree better off than the beggar that suea for alms at thy door! They will tell thee, and they will tell thee truly—that he has spent his money in riotous living, that he has squandered it away in folly—that no one will pity him, because he did not pity himself—they will tell thee this, and much more, and thou wilt, perchance, join with them in the outcry, that is even now begun, against thy unfortunate parent! They found not out this, as long as they were feasted and entertained, and helped to spend that which should, my poor boy, have been thy own!"

My rebellious heart, as I went on, softened somewhat at the sight of my son in tears, who now approached me with tenderness in his face and manner. When I ceased speaking, he hung on my neck weeping, and said as soon as he could, "Father, dear father, how could you say what I have just heard? Me reproach you! your son! your child! Surely, sir, your mind is not quite itself, through the trouble you have suffered, or you would never have talked in this manner. Tell me, oh! tell me, is there any

thing I can do to assist you in your difficulties? You have given me a good education; surely it will be possible soon for me to do something—at any rate, I can support myself. Your mind need not be burdened in caring for me at least. Give me your love, your affection, which—pardon me, my father, for saying so—I have feared, of late years, I had nearly lost O give me back *that*, as I remember it when very young, and when our house used not to be so full of company as since, and I will ask nothing more."

The boy clung to me as he spoke, and we embraced each other tenderly. The long pent-up source of tears seemed broken—and my arid heart was refreshed with being able to weep. I involuntarily thanked God that my child yet felt for me. This was the first softening emotion that had visited my seared spirit for a very long time; I hailed it as a precursor of good; and a gleam of hope seemed to illumine for a moment, and but for a moment, the awful darkness of my path.

What pen could portray the fearful state of my mind? I felt I had lost all—all of earth, and, oh! more entire destitution—all of heaven—my money,

my friends (?)—my character,—were gone ! The world turned its back on me ; the church justly regarded me as an apostate and a reprobate. Where to go, I did not know ; to whom to turn, I was at an utter loss. Solitude seemed dreadful ; and yet now, oftentimes and many, I must be alone.

These thoughts, and many others, numerous and unutterable, pressed on my mind the day I was obliged to leave my house and all its elegancies. It was soon sold, and the furniture it contained, to pay my debts.

That night I took some obscure humble lodging. Wretched as I was, and full of more important contemplations, still, the difference of every external thing there to what I had been so long accustomed, pressed upon my senses a more keen and vivid feeling of desolation.

Instead of walls covered with rare and costly pictures, were those of bare and soiled mortar, not even papered over ; in place of luxurious couches, were hard and unsightly chairs, and all the other furniture of a similar homely kind. There was none of the cheerful aspect, the exceeding cleanliness, the modest, though inexpensive comforts, of

the cottage of my early days on the sea-girt coast of Cornwall; all bespoke bare, cold, miserable penury; it typified, in a measure, the desolation and change in myself.

The contrast of this place and my early humble home forced itself on me the first hour I entered it, and from that thought arose a strong, earnest, vehement desire once more to behold again the scene of my best days, the place in which I had lived a different being—an entirely opposite life. My mind fastened on this idea, I became absorbed in the train of reflections and emotions it suggested.—I lived over again my happy childhood—my contemplative youth, part of which had been spent, in what now appeared merely imaginary regrets. I recalled minutely to mind the first soul-stirring meeting with Mr. Wesley; my happiness; the peaceful, yet energetic life that followed that awakening; then came in review, the angel-form of my first-loved* wife—how I welcomed, in this hour of solitude and sorrow, even the remembrance of her name and image!

I dwelt on our first interview, of my blissful yet tranquil courtship; of the divine repose, though

possessing enough of the highest kind of excitement, of my married life; then, in memory's procession, came in review, Agnes' death-bed scene—her faith, her love, her peaceful end, and, (what struck me now as a dimly prophetic announcement) her alarm, during the delirium of her illness, at what she fancied she saw of my future mischances. I dwelt circumstantially on each word she had uttered about it—though, as I can aver, this portion of her communication, had never till now been thought of, since it had occurred.

'The rock seemed struck by these reflections—the hard, obdurate, guilty heart gushed out anew, in one swelling flood of weeping. Soul and body were prostrated before the God of mercy, and from the depths I cried mightily to Him ! " Sainted spirit of Agnes ! didst thou not carry up to heaven the first intelligence of a sinner repenting ? of a thrice-fallen soul returning from his wanderings ? Wert thou not delegated from on high, with those precious influences and intimations of mercy, that enabled him thus to pour out his sorrows and his sins before God ?"

Let it not be thought that this idea is mere

sentimentalism, and that I mistake the true nature of penitence in thus speaking of any inferior influence. I know and am persuaded, that all genuine repentance must emanate from the Divine Spirit; but does He not often allow or appoint subordinate spirits, to wait upon, and minister to those who need such assistance, or could be acted upon for good, by such agencies?

I have a clear and distinct belief that the spirit of my angel-wife *was* permitted to hover near, and convey to me some inexplicably gracious influence. I could mentally see her gazing compassionately upon me. But whether this be a delusion or not, one thing is certain, that the thoughts that came associated with her remembrance, and her words, made it possible for me,—nay, almost constrained me to kneel down, which I had not for a very long time done, and, in the deepest prostration of soul, “agonize” for the slightest hope of again entering the “kingdom of heaven.”

A faint hope—an almost imperceptible glimmer of faith—had sprung up while thus engaged, that my prayers would be heard and answered. The thick blackness of despair, which had of late years

enveloped my mind whenever thoughts of God, or a hereafter, had occurred to it—seemed in a degree dispersed, or at least not so palpable ; if this had not been the case, I should have continued prayerless, for

—————“ With despair, devotion mingles not—
The prayer breathed hopelessly, is breathed in vain ”

Some portion of the softening look, that melted so effectually the penitent Peter’s heart, was in this hour vouchsafed me, and I prayed—oh ! with what intense earnestness did I pray ! Yet my sins did not rise up before me, then, with the awful force they have since done. I felt guilty, indeed, and undone—wretched and desolate—but the exceeding greatness of my transgressions stood not out in so clear and vivid a light as afterwards I beheld them. Perhaps if they had, I could not have poured out so earnestly the unutterable groanings of my spirit. It is since I have been favoured with some glimmering hopes of pardon, that sin has appeared so “ exceeding sinful.”

That night I dreamed about Agnes. Latterly, when her image had haunted my sleep, it generally had worn a frowning aspect ; now she smiled sweetly

on me, and bade me be of good cheer, for we should yet meet again. When I awoke in the morning, and looked round on the desolate dwelling, and remembered the humiliating position in which I was placed, my old despondent feeling returned, and my heart sank within me.

I endeavoured to realize again something of the cheering emotions that had the previous night visited me; yet I feared to think my devotional feelings were "aught but presumptuous hopes; however, I determined to persist in praying. I felt all other refuge had forsaken me—and to this one hold I resolved tenaciously to cling.

After I had formed this resolution, it seemed that a sneering fiend whispered in my ear, "Yes," thou canst pray *now* when other delights are fled, when sin could be no longer profitable or practicable. Coward and fool that thou art, to besiege heaven with prayer, when thou hast so long chosen earth for thy portion: more manly and becoming would it be, to present a front of iron to thy fate, and, by bearing, conquer it."

I was going to yield to this suggestion, to acknowledge its plausibility—when the thought,

from whence, probably, it proceeded, and a degree of mental power vouchsafed, enabled me to see in a few moments its fallacy, determined me to reject it, and persist in my first resolution. "Who, or what am I," thus I reasoned, "to depend on any of my own resources? weak as helpless infancy—unstable as the wind—guilty and ruined! I am the last of God's creatures, who should dare to pretend to grapple with their fate or their misfortunes! in the lowest dust of self-abasement, is my appropriate, my only place! my proud heart, indeed, swells and frets to come to this conclusion, but I know there is an influence that can make even humiliation welcome."

CHAPTER XXVI.

' We barter life for pottage : sell true bliss,
For wealth or power ; for pleasure or renown
Thus, Esau-like, our Father's blessing miss,
Then wash with bitter tears our faded crown.'

' KEBE.

I now lived a very solitary and wretched life ; not being willing to face, or meet any of my former acquaintance. I kept within doors great part of the day. Sometimes the devotional feelings to which I have adverted, and some solace from them, would just keep me above the horrors of despair : but often I yielded to black despondency, and concluded I had sinned away all hope of mercy.

The impaired state of my health, too, increased my mental sufferings. Occasionally—when suffering from that dreadful depression which generally succeeds when the free indulgence in stimulants is suddenly abandoned—I have been violently tempted, either to take stronger draughts, or to

substitute that deadly narcotic, which would effectually lull my sorrows in the last long sleep. I was, however, wonderfully saved from this powerful temptation. The measure of faith vouchsafed, enabled me to repel it. I determined to live and to drink the cup of bitterness to its dregs, rather than rush unbidden into the presence of the great, the dreadful Judge. I dreaded not the physical act of dying—nay, I would have welcomed it, but I feared Him, who could reserve me to a yet more awful punishment.

About a week after I had been in my abode of penury and loneliness—for I suffered not even my son to know where I lodged—I was one evening startled at hearing some one gently rap at the door, and ask admission to my chamber. I felt vexed and annoyed that any person had found me out, having given a strict charge to the woman of the house, not to let it be known that I lodged there. “Who is he,” I demanded with a tone of asperity, that wishes to intrude on my privacy, and to pry into my sorrows? go, whoever you are, without further parley, and seek more jocund company.” “Only let me in for one minute,” replied a voice,

that it now struck me I had heard before ; " and if you desire it, I will not stay longer." Slowly I unfastened the lock, and once again stood before me the form of John Wesley.

" Think not," said he, " I have sought you out through any other than a kind motive. Do not suppose I would have intruded on your solitude, but from the wish to cheer it. The last time we met, you quickly left me ; I supposed and feared my company was undesirable. Since then, I am aware you have been in affliction, your worldly wealth has fled,—happy will it be, if, with its departure, you return to Him who can alone grant you the true riches.

" Hold," cried I, " do you forget to whom you are speaking ? Have I not sinned away my birth-right ? Is there yet any place left for repentance ? Did I not, when in possession of those true riches you speak of, barter them away for very vanity ?—for the pleasures of sin, that verily endured *but* for a season ?"

" My son," said the good old man, his eyes beaming with compassionate tenderness, " my son, for so I almost involuntarily call thee—this sounds

like the language of penitence—it sounds like the sentiments of the prodigal, who, when all his earthly delights had fled, "came to himself," and felt a yearning after his father's house, where he had before-time tasted true happiness! Do I interpret aright? Dost thou indeed seek in earnestness to arise, and go to Him? Oh! open thy burdened heart to one who loves thee, and longs for thy salvation!

The air of sincerity, the extreme kindness of manner, the absence of anything like reproach or rebuke, in what the venerable man uttered, softened me towards him, and I felt something like a gleam of satisfaction, that he had thus sought out and found me; it encouraged me, too, in opening my heart to him; and when once my lips were unsealed, the long-hidden emotions of my soul found vent in words. I confessed to him my long catalogue of sin and backsliding, and this not as a task, or penance, but as a natural and appropriate relief to my burdened heart, as well as an evidence of my sincerity.

Wise and excellent were his remarks, in reply to my self-accusations. He attempted not to palliate

the enormity of my guilt; he sought not to check or lessen my sense of it; but he laboured to convince me it would be forgiven, if I again applied for pardon through the Redeemer's atonement. He urged me to pray for an *evidence* of this remission, and not to rest until I had a clear sense of it. But this last advice I could not exactly receive. "Enough," thought I, "if I can but obtain a glimmering hope of mercy—^{as for} an assurance of it, the boon is too great to ask."

This interview operated on my mind in the most salutary manner. Mr. Wesley induced me to attend once more a place of worship; and I used to creep in the evening into the chapel, afraid of being seen or noticed. However, sometimes I heard there what soothed my wounded, humbled spirits. As my religious feelings deepened, the stamp my original character had taken seemed to return. It was indeed like a "coming to myself." Sometimes a ray of vivid light would pierce my mind, so as to make it see and feel the utterly debasing, ignoble nature of sin, and the awful spell it had exercised over me, even to the prostrating of all my higher, intellectual as well as moral energies. Oh! then,

how I would loath myself, and repent in dust and ashes!

The desire I have noticed of once more visiting my youthful home, soon again seized me. It was not a mere desire, it was an intense yearning—an inextinguishable longing to see, before I died, the place of my bright hopes, of my happy days.

Mr. Wesley, who returned to Cork after a week's travelling in the country, when he heard me express this strong desire, did not check, but rather encouraged it. He told me—for he was in correspondence with many persons there—that the very cottage my parents had lived in, was at that period unoccupied, and that he had no doubt I might easily obtain possession from the gentleman who had purchased the estate. Thus encouraged, I determined as soon as possible to put my project in execution.

Mr. Wesley never made any long sojourn at a place—he soon left Cork, but, before he departed, he again visited, counselled, and prayed with me. Never was there a heart more thoroughly imbued with the melting tenderness of the gospel than was his. He wept abundantly when he blessed and

parted with me for the last time. He was then in his eightieth year—a beautiful specimen of green old age. The remarkable exemption from the usual infirmities of age which was accorded to the favoured Jewish lawgiver, seemed vouchsafed likewise to him—"his eye was not dim, nor his natural force" scarcely at all "abated." A benevolence boundless and wide as the circumference of human wants and human woes, and limited to no section of persons, or geographical situation—was the species of philanthropy with which Christianity had filled his soul.

That blessed truth—so rife with repose, as well as energy—that "God is love,"—and the mode in which the universality of that love was manifested to man, having been realized by him with the full assurance of faith—his life had been, for the most part, one sublime effort of bringing all the needy and erring children of Adam with whom he met, to believe and participate in "the love the Father hath bestowed on them," and thereby to taste its blessedness. Great and incalculable was the amount of good this remarkable man was the instrument of effecting; and though—as objectors would say—

alloys frequently mingled in and attended it, still the glorious facts remain, of the inroads made on the acknowledged territories of Satan—of the enlargements effected in the universal church, by bringing so many wanderers into the fold of the good Shepherd.

I, as an humble unworthy individual, cannot but testify to the fatherly tenderness, the apostolic zeal, with which this energetic servant of God treated me. I shall see him no more in the flesh; but O may I, after all my grievous wanderings, be permitted to see him—though it be but afar off—in heaven.

CHAPTER XXVII

" Soul of our souls, and safeguard of the world !
Sustain—Thou only canst—the sick of heart !
Restore their broken spirits, and recall
Their lost affections unto thee, and thine !"

WORDSWORTH.

I now made every preparation for leaving Cork ; I arranged my affairs, as much as it was possible to do ; and, reserving the smallest pittance left out of the wreck of my once ample fortune for my own maintenance, the remainder was appropriated to the sole use of my son. The poor boy did not like the idea of my leaving him behind—he urged me to take him likewise ; but this I would not think of, though I did not exactly tell him my reasons—my journey, in reality, was more like a pilgrimage of penance, than a pleasant excursion—and the penurious manner in which I determined to live, and the utter solitude that would be my portion, altogether rendered his going with me, out of the question—he was well off, and comfortable, where

he was—the master of the establishment had well supplied a parent's place—on all accounts, it was more desirable that he lived apart from me.

The first vessel that sailed for Plymouth, I took a passage on board. I bade no adieu to any one—entered into no explanations—solitary and shunned, I left Ireland, the land of my sins and sorrows—though no accusation would I bring against *it* on these accounts; it might have been, but for my own fault, a very Goshen of moral and intellectual improvement. I met with many kind, warm-hearted men and women there, some of whom would, even after my degradation and ruin, have opened their hearts and houses to me—but I repelled their kindness, I accepted not their sympathy, I wished not any stranger to intermeddle with my sorrows.

All that remained for me now, I concluded, was repentance and mortification. The short remainder of my life I resolved to spend in a manner to demonstrate the reality of my penitence. I thought of the austeries that were practised by ancient devotees, and almost determined to wear a shirt of haircloth myself, and sleep on the bare ground. If there had been a Protestant order of La Trappe,

I should have sought its silence and seclusion for the remainder of my days. Not that I dreamed of making satisfaction for my sins by any thing I could *do*; but it seemed as if these, or some such tests, were necessary, to prove the sincerity of my sorrow.

* * * * *

I have been now domiciled in this cottage—the cottage in which I first drew breath—for some months. I found little difficulty in gaining possession, for the house was falling to decay, and no one cared to live in it.

I wished to negotiate with the gentleman on whose estate it stood, through some other person; but after considering the matter, I determined on humbling myself sufficiently to go in person, and solicit him to let me live in it at a trifling rent. His estate joins the one that formerly belonged to my beloved Agnes, and which some years since I sold. I had a slight knowledge of him, but he would not have remembered me but for my telling him my name. He looked shocked and surprised to see me in such reduced circumstances, for I scrupled not to inform him I was poor, and could not afford

a more expensive habitation. He kindly had some necessary repairs effected; and with purchasing a few articles that were absolutely indispensable, I entered upon the only shelter I shall ever seek in this world.

Notwithstanding the bare and desolate interior of my abode, I feel a degree of satisfaction in it, quite different from the manner I regarded the sordid lodgings I last occupied in Ireland. This place, all different as it is to what I remember it—still seems my home—every inch of ground is hallowed by memories of the past—by reminiscences of my beloved mother, by recollections of my happy boyhood, and still more by the blissful period of my first perception of the value and blessedness of religion.

I frequently endeavour to dwell, in thought, wholly on these times—to banish altogether a recurrence to any other period—but this is impossible—the rankling stings of conscience forbid such blessed oblivion. Nevertheless, the balm of memory is not wholly lost—*some* comfort springs from its soothing influence; and the idea that the two sainted spirits of those I most loved on earth, may

perhaps know and rejoice in my penitence—has often power to impart some ray of consolation.

But more frequently, darker moods obtain; and the awful state into which I was so lately plunged, harrows up my soul with intense agony. I think of the “presumptuous sins,” that the psalmist prays for deliverance from with shuddering. Did *they* not oppress my conscience—had I left the world, and come hither and joined myself once more with the visible church when my reason returned, after its overthrow—from how much deeper transgression should I not have escaped—how much lighter would have been the load of actual guilt!

Does any one think here, that it matters little—if a person be not in a consciously converted state—whether they sin much or little—whether their pursuits be of a negative character, or of an actually evil nature—whether, in short, their life be comparatively innocent, or flagrantly wicked:—so consider, I am aware, many religionists. But they cannot have felt what I have, methinks, on account of *actual* guilt: neither does this system of theology accord, as I must think, with the declarations of the scriptures. Do we not read there of *comparative* punishments—what means the “beating with

*few stripes?" And why do some sins oppress and rankle in the conscience, when it is awakened, so much more than others, if there be no degrees in moral turpitude—no farther distance from God than the barrier our fallen nature has erected? What does that saying of our Lord mean, "Thou art not *far* from the kingdom of God?" Surely it implies that there *are* degrees of distance—that there are some states of mind more analogous with the reception of religious truth, with the abiding influences of the Holy Spirit, than others. The preparation of mind of which I speak—the inclination towards good—doubtless proceeds from the Source of all good; but, nevertheless, this consideration does not annul the fact that men must be judged by their individual actions, and these actions will accord and be in harmony with their mental state; and this mental state admits of almost infinite moral and spiritual gradations: so that, to say all men are *equally* guilty in the sight of God—as one must infer some persons mean, from the manner they treat the subject—seems to me very far from actual truth, and contrary to the plain intimations of the Bible.*

In regard to my own case, I cannot help deeply,

intensely deplored, that I ever rushed with such mad speed in the downward course: every *added* sin, after I had thrown off the outward restraints of morality, weighs with a tenfold force on my awakened conscience, and gives a fresh poignancy to my self-loathing.

What need to mention a shirt of hair-cloth, or flagellations of the body? can these outward penances compare to the spirit's torture? to the misery of the loss of one's own self-esteem? to the gnawing consciousness of self-degradation?

Sometimes these thoughts assume such a terrible aspect and power, that but for some slight glimmerings of hope, some faint sense of the efficacy of the great atonement in procuring pardon and renewed peace—I could not bear their contemplation.

Some good, simple men, who have found me out, and occasionally visit my solitude, exhort me, when they speak of religion, to throw off my burden, to believe and rejoice in the Saviour's sacrifice. But they treat these subjects so lightly—they view them so differently from what I do—their experience is so unlike mine—as well as their whole style of

mind and thought—that I gain but little consolation, but little good, from their sympathy. Yes I must “mourn apart,” and emphatically experience the anguish of a “wounded spirit,” to which “no stranger” can administer a cure.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

" And what greater measure can we have, than that we should bring joy to our brother, who with his dreary eyes looks to heaven, and round about, and cannot find so much rest as to lay his eyelids close together—than, that thy tongue should be tuned to heavenly accents, and make the weary soul listen for light and ease ; and when he perceives there is such a thing in the world, and in the order of things, as comfort and joy, to begin to break forth from the prison of his sorrows, at the door of sighs and tears ; and, by little and little, melt into showers and refreshments ? This is glory to thy voice, and employment fit for the highest angel."

BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

THE voice of consolation has at length reached me ; the accents of christian sympathy have once more sounded sweetly in my ears—my crushed heart has again responded to the influences of kindness in this, my anchorite's dwelling.

The clergyman of the parish has found me out, and visited me. At first I shrunk from his approaches, and repelled his sympathy—my seared and withered spirit seemed unable again to expand, even under the genial influence of christian love.

As the kind efforts of those pious men I have mentioned, failed to soothe or open my heart, I thought all other attempts would be likewise futile. But nothing daunted by my repellent bearing, Mr. M—— still continued his generous attempts to mitigate my grief—to obtain my confidence. No mind, however self-concentrated, can long withstand the benign influence of christian kindness: I have at last been subdued by this excellent man's persevering, delicate attentions—the ice has thawed—the remnant of my constitutional pride has given way; and I now begin to regard him with feelings of confidence and gratitude. He appears to me, the most perfect example of a parish priest, that I have ever yet met.

The Church of England may easily hold her *desirable* supremacy, if all, or the major part of her ministers, were such men as he. His life is one continuous, unostentatious effort of the most comprehensive benevolence.

He labours as much as possible to relieve the temporal wants, and to amend the temporal condition, of the poor among his parishioners, before he sets about the more important object which he

has in view—their spiritual improvement. He justly considers it useless, if not unfeeling, to press upon their attention ~~the~~ condition of their souls, while they are groaning under the present and palpable evils of their bodies. In order to relieve these, he distributes among them, or puts them in a way of procuring for themselves, the loaves and fishes of this life, in order that being freed from the grinding necessities of nature, they may be at liberty to attend to their higher life—the immaterial principle within, which requires for its nourishment, the “bread from heaven.”

And for the accomplishment of this philanthropic course of conduct, he practises resolute self-denial. His house, and all its appointments, betoken the most primitive simplicity and plainness ; yet he has the finest perception of beauty, and a taste for proper ornament—and would, did he consult his inclinations, like to see his walls covered with some choice works of art. So I heard him say one day, when speaking on this subject :“ But, ” added he, as he continued it—“ were I to indulge my passion for painting—particularly that branch of the art which is dedicated to religion, and which I hold as almost

divine, were I thus to indulge, what would become of the poor of my flock, who have not wherewith to purchase the necessaries of life?

My poor £500 a year would buy but few pictures, but may, with management, help many of my necessitous brethren: *dare I say to such, "Be ye warmed, and clothed,"* and not give them wherewith to be so? I find, my friend, if we would act out our high and holy calling, many of even our lawful inclinations must be sacrificed—not but that the sacrifice has a reward, often a present reward, in one's own mental peace and inward approval."

Everything connected with Mr. M. is in perfect keeping with these sentiments. His wife seems animated by the same spirit: not that I know much of her—for I shun the society of all women—they too keenly bring to remembrance my own suffering and sorrows. But, as far as I can understand, they both find their own happiness, in promoting that of others. It is, perhaps, needless to remark, that this sublime kind of benevolence can only spring from its true source—deep, vital piety, kept in vigorous exercise, by constant communion with the Source of all virtue and of all good. For, can

such results be obtained from any inferior motives, from any inferior influence? The innate, clinging selfishness of our nature, can it be loosened or eradicated by other, or less elevated considerations? In vain do we expect men to "love as brethren"—to be "pitiful" to be "courteous"—to "look every one, not on his own, but on the things of others"—to "rejoice with those who do rejoice, and to weep with those who weep"—unless they are actuated, in a degree, by that Spirit from whom emanated these wise, these benevolent precepts.

I revert to my own sad history in confirmation of this truth—for, as long as I lived under the influence, in my earlier and happy days, of christian principles, I felt I was not my own—that it was a high privilege, no less than a sacred duty, to labour to promote the good of others—not always by preaching or exhortation, or any direct appeal to their consciences—but by making them feel I sympathized with them as fellow-men, and fellow-sufferers; and, as participating in our common lapsed humanity, striving to induce them to become candidates for higher hopes and a better happiness, and a more elevated mode of being, than they had

yet entered on ; and thus to obtain the highest state of perfectibility, of which our fallen nature is capable.

True, my own subsequent history, it may be thought, was a refutation of this sublime theory—but it is not so ; for as long as those holy motives actuated me, so long did their legitimate effects follow :—when the fountain was forsaken, little wonder that the streams dried up, and disappeared. Does the objection still force itself—Why, if there were such an amount of real palpable good in the ways of religion, why should I have forsaken them for an inferior happiness ? I reply—The frailty of my nature was overcome by the present, the visible, the tangible :—faith was lost and swallowed up by sight—the earthly prevailed over the spiritual principle. But do I attribute this evil consequence to necessity ? to the irresistible decree of destiny ? or, in other words, to the will of God ?—I shudder at the impiety of such a conclusion. I believe that I *might* have “fought the good fight”—that I *might* have withstood in the evil day—I know I had often great strugglings with my conscience before I *could* take

many of the steps that gradually led into the paths of acknowledged sin. This was particularly the case as it related to my second ill-starred marriage ; every preliminary stage of that proceeding was accompanied by severe mental conflict: passion and conscience then came in fearful collision ! It is known how the former triumphed, and how deep and deadly have been the results that followed that triumph.

* * * * *

My self-imposed task is nearly ended—the act of unburdening my conscience is performed—the imperfect sketch of my chequered life is almost brought to a close. The recording on paper my sad story has furnished me for some time past with employment, which, though often of a painful and humiliating nature, has not been altogether unsalutary. Besides the unburdening my mind, I have by this means endeavoured to warn others of the shoals on which the bark of my happiness foundered. I have endeavoured, too, to press on their attention the intimate connexion ever maintained between happiness and goodness; and that in attending to the dictates of an enlightened con-

SCIENCE, is present and future peace alone to be found. These, it may be thought, are trite truths, but experience tests their importance, and confirms their value.

* * * * *

Life's feeble sands are now running low—its weak tide is ebbing—the golden bowl is breaking—the silver cord is loosening—I feel my days are numbered—Life's feverish dream will soon be over, and I shall awaken to the realities of eternity ! So let it be, for

" My trust is in the Cross—*there lies my rest,*
My hope and sole delight."

F I N I S.

